NATION

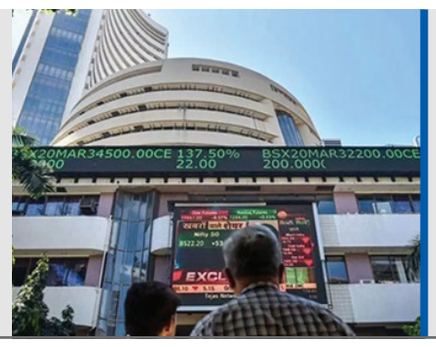
HC pulls up MCD over UPSC centres

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Stock market closes higher for 4th straight day

≫ Page: 7 ≪



SPORTS

In pursuit of glory: India's heavyweights turn on style

≫ Page: 8 ≪

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

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## Delhi gets 100 mm rainfall in 1 hour, flights diverted

**NEW DELHI, 31 JULY**

Delhi recorded more than a hundred millimetres of rainfall in one hour, leading to waterlogging in several areas of the national capital and prompting the weather office to issue a 'red' warning. According to the India Meteorological Department's (IMD) Automatic Weather Station (AWS) network, the Pragati Maidan observatory in central Delhi recorded 112.5 mm of rainfall in one hour. An extreme amount of precipitation in a short period, specifically 100 mm of rainfall within an hour, is defined by the IMD as a "cloud burst".
At least 10 flights that were to land at the Delhi airport were diverted on Wednesday.
*—PTI*

## 5-yr-old carries gun to Bihar school, shoots classmate

**SUPAUL, 31 JULY**

A five-year-old boy in Bihar reached his school with a handgun on Wednesday and opened fire on another child, leaving the Class 3 student injured, police said. The shocking incident took place in the north Bihar district of Supaul where the boy, a nursery student, had gone to school with the firearm hidden in his bag. According to Superintendent of Police, Shaishav Yadav, "The student fired at a 10-year-old boy, who studies in the same school in Class 3. The bullet hit his arm." "The injured boy has been rushed to a hospital. We are trying to find out how the boy got to lay his hands on the firearm and managed to carry it to the private school, which is situated in Lalpatti area," Yadav said. *—PTI*

## Swiggy gets highest no. of veg orders from B'luru

**BENGALURU, 31 JULY**

Food delivery service Swiggy has identified Bengaluru as the leading City in India for vegetarian orders, surpassing cities like Ayodhya and Ahmedabad that prefer vegetarian dishes more. According to a press release by Swiggy, one out of every three Bengaluru vegetarian orders placed across the country. "Bengaluru isn't just the Silicon Valley of India, it's the veggie valley too. With 1 in every 3 vegetarian orders originating from the City." it stated. This insight was part of Swiggy's unveiling of Green Dot Awards, which recognises top-performing vegetarian restaurants nationwide.
*—Salar News*

## Israel assassinates Hamas Chief Haniyeh in Iran

**BEIRUT, 31 JULY**

Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas' supreme leader in exile who landed on Israel's hit list after the militant group staged its surprise October 7 attacks, was killed in an airstrike in the Iranian capital early Wednesday. He was 61. Hamas said Haniyeh was killed at his residence in Tehran in an Israeli airstrike after he attended the swearing-in ceremony of Iran's new president. Israel has not commented on the accusation. Haniyeh's death makes him the latest Hamas official to be killed by Israel since the Hamas-led 7 October attacks, when militants killed 1,200 people and took about 250 hostages. come the deadliest and longest in the Arab-Israeli conflict.*—PTI*
*>>>More on Page 6*

A Bailey bridge was constructed and rescue operation were underway after landslides triggered by heavy rain at Chooralmala, in Wayanad district on Wednesda *PHOTO: PTI*

# Kerala landslides death toll rises to 251

## Rescuers were unable to reach inland areas; Over were 8,000 moved to relief camps

**WAYANAD, 31 JULY**

0The death toll in the devastating landslides in Kerala's Wayanad district rose to 251 on Wednesday, while 200 were missing even as the rescue teams intensified efforts to find survivors trapped under the debris on the second day of the search operations.

Tiny makeshift bridges were erected over swollen rivers and excavators were engaged nonstop in removing piles of debris and boulders in the landslide-hit hamlets of Wayanad. Rescue operators, including Army personnel, NDRF, state emergency service personnel, and local people, were fighting against all odds to carry out the tough mission even as rain continued to lash several areas.

There were tense moments when people, including women and children, were being brought to safer places through the narrow, makeshift bridges across gushing rivers. Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said that over 1,500 people were saved. In some places, rescuers formed human bridges using ropes to ensure the safe evacuation of people. Vijayan said that in Wayanad, there are currently 8,017 people in 82 relief camps. Among them were 19 pregnant women. Harrowing scenes of dead bodies in sitting and lying positions inside destroyed houses could be seen as rescue operations resumed in the landslide-devastated Mundakkai hamlet on Wednesday morning. The rescuers could reach many inland areas, which were totally cut off on. Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhiurged the government to extend all possible help to the people of landslides-hit Wayanad and look into the "ecological issue" there. Karnatka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced a compensation of Rs 5 lakh to the families of Kannadigas who died in landslides in neighbouring Kerala. According to government sources, at least six people from the state are feared dead in Monday's landslide. *—Agencies*
*>>>More on Pages 2, 4 & 5*

Rescue workers carry the body of a victim in Wayanad district on Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

## SHAH SAYS KERALA FOREWARNED ABOUT LANDSLIDES; CM REFUTES

**NEW DELHI/T'PURAM, 31 JULY**

Amit Shah *PHOTO: PTI*

The Centre had forewarned the Kerala government about possible floods and landslides but it ignored these warnings, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Wednesday in Parliament, prompting a sharp response from Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, who refuted his remarks as "baseless" and "inconsistent".

"I would like to specify that on July 23, the Kerala government was given an early warning by the central government, seven days prior (to the tragedy) then again on 24 July.," Shah said. His statement came amidst criticism from the Opposition who blamed the loss of lives due to the lack of early warning systems for natural calamities such as the one in Wayanad. However, Vijayan strongly refuted Shah's claim and gave details of the alerts issued by various central agencies.

>>>

**FIRM DENIES CHARGE**

## Infosys gets notice for tax evasion of ₹32K cr

**NEW DELHI, 31 JULY**

- Infosys argued that GST payments are eligible for credit or refund against export of IT services.

India's second largest IT services company Infosys has been slapped with a 'pre-show cause' notice for alleged GST evasion to the tune of about Rs 32,403 crore.

In a BSE filing, the Bengaluru headquartered IT firm said Karnataka State GST authorities have issued a pre-show cause notice for payment of GST of Rs 32,403 crores for the period July 2017 to March 2022, towards the expenses incurred by overseas branch offices of Infosys Ltd, and added that the company has responded to the pre-show cause notice.

"... The company has also received a pre-show cause notice from the Director General of GST Intelligence on the same matter and the company is in the process of responding to the same," the filing said.

The company believes that as per regulations, GST is not applicable on such expenses.

"Additionally, as per a recent Circular... issued by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs on the recommendations of the GST Council, services provided by the overseas branches to Indian entity are not subject to GST," Infosys said.

Infosys argued that GST payments are eligible for credit or refund against export of IT services.

"Infosys has paid all its GST dues and is fully in compliance with the central and state regulations on this matter," the company contended.
*—PTI*

## Cong MP submits privilege motion notice against PM

**NEW DELHI, 31 JULY**

The row over BJP MP Anurag Thakur's remarks in Lok Sabha escalated on Wednesday with Congress submitting a notice to move a privilege motion against Prime Minister Narendra Modi for posting on 'X' a video that allegedly also contained expunged portions of Thakur's speech.

Thakur's remark, during the discussion on the Union Budget on Tuesday, that "whose caste is not known talks about caste census", triggered an uproar, with the opposition slamming the comment ostensibly directed at Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi as "insensitive" and "abusive".

Lok Sabha was adjourned till noon amid protests by Opposition members over Thakur's remarks in the House and their demand for a caste census.

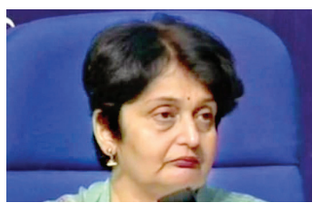
BJP hit back at Congress, saying what was wrong in asking about Gandhi's caste as he had been asking about the caste of others, including government officials, judges, soldiers and even journalists, an apparent reference to the Congress leader's remarks in the past when he batted for caste census.

Charajit Singh Channi, a Dalit MP of the Congress in Lok Sabha, submitted a notice to Speaker Om Birla seeking to move a privilege motion under Rule 222 of the Rules of Procedure against the prime minister.

The notice moved by Channi claimed that PM Modi had shared the expunged comments in Thakur's speech, without mentioning the details.
*—PTI*

### 1.94L cases of child pornography, rape received on NCRP portal

About 1.94 lakh complaints regarding child pornography and rape or gang rape had been registered on the government's National Cybercrime Reporting Portal till 30 April, Union minister Annapurna Devi said on Wednesday. In a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, she said NCRP has received over 16.18 crore visitors.



Preeti Sudan *PHOTO: FB*

## HEALTH SECY PREETI SUDAN NAMED UPSC HEAD

**NEW DELHI, 31 JULY**

The government has appointed former health secretary Preeti Sudan chairperson of the Union Public Service Commission after Manoj Soni resigned from the UPSC's top post early this month, according to an official order. Sudan, currently a member of the UPSC, will take charge on Thursday. "The President has... approved the appointment of Preeti Sudan, Member, UPSC for performing the duties of Chairman, UPSC with effect from August 1, 2024, till fur- ther orders or till 29 April, 2025, whichever is earlier," the order dated 29 July said.
*—PTI*

**WONDERS IN OLYMPICS**

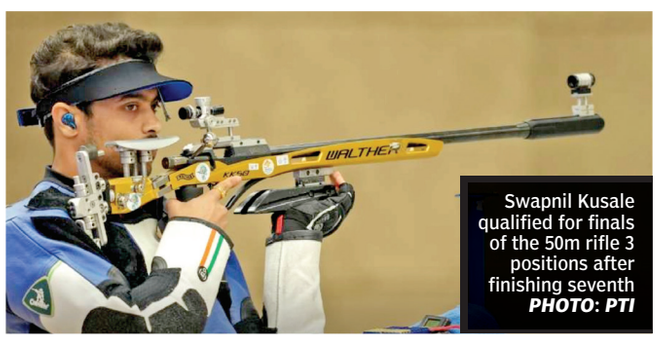
## *Kusale makes 3-position final, Sindhu enters qualifying stage*

**CHATEAUROUX, 31 JULY**

Swapnil Kusale, the first Indian shooter to reach the 50m rifle three positions final at the Olympics, draws inspiration from ex-Indian cricketer MS Dhoni as he too is a railway ticket collector like the cricket icon was early in his career.

The 29-year-old from Kambalwadi village near Kolhapur in Maharashtra has been competing in international events since 2012 but he had to wait another 12 years to make his Olympics debut at the Paris Games.

Being calm and patient are pre-requisites for a shooter and those two traits are also the hallmark of Dhoni's personality. It is therefore no surprise that Kusale relates to Dhoni's life story. He has watched the biopic of the World Cup winner multiple times and hopes to match the lofty achievements of the champion cricketer.



Swapnil Kusale qualified for finals of the 50m rifle 3 positions after finishing seventh *PHOTO: PTI*

In a display of determination and grit, Balraj Panwar, India's sole representative in rowing at the Paris 2024 Olympics, secured his place in Final D of the men's singles sculls event. Competing in the semi-final C/D on Wednesday, Panwar clocked a time of 7:04.97, finishing sixth. India shuttler PV Sindhu marched into the Round of 16 of badminton women's singles event. Also, Lakshya Sen defeated Indonesia's Jonatan Christie in the badminton men's singles.
*—PTI*

## NCLAT DEFERS HEARING ON BYJU'S-BCCI CASE

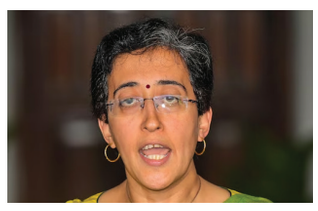
**NEW DELHI, 31 JULY**

Insolvency appellate tribunal NCLAT on Wednesday deferred its decision on the settlement between Byju's and cricket board BCCI after its US-based creditor alleged 'round-tripping' of the money by the edtech firm's founder.

Chennai bench of NCLAT has asked the now-suspended promoters of Byju's to furnish an undertaking by Thursday, that over Rs 158 crore to be paid by Riju Raveendran (brother of Byju's founder Byju Raveendran) is not tainted and not against the order passed by a US-based court. Meanwhile, the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal has also directed the interim resolution professional of Think and Learn Pvt Ltd, which owns Byju's, not to constitute Committee of Creditors till 1 August. *—PTI*
*>>>More on Page 4*

## Delhi to bring law to regulate coaching centres

**NEW DELHI, 31 JULY**



Minister Atishi *PHOTO: PTI*

Delhi government will bring a law to regulate coaching centres in the city, cabinet minister Atishi said on Wednesday, days after three IAS aspirants drowned in the flooded basement of an institute in Old Rajinder Nagar.

Addressing a press conference, the minister said the government will constitute a committee comprising government officials and students from different coaching hubs to frame the law.

"The law will have provisions for infrastructure, qualification of teachers, fee regulation and preventing misleading advertisements. Public feedback will also be sought," she said.

"Basements of 30 coaching centres in Rajinder Nagar, Mukherjee Nagar, Laxmi Nagar and Preet Vihar have been sealed while notices have been issued to 200 other coaching centres," she said.

She said the report of the magisterial probe into the Old Rajinder Nagar incident will be submitted in the next six days. The magisterial inquiry will ascertain which officer was incharge of the grievances portal where the complaint was uploaded and how it was ignored," Atishi said.

A civil services aspirant from Gwalior had on Monday claimed that he had complained to the MCD about the illegal use of the basement by the institute and sent reminders on 15 and 22 July but no action was taken in the matter. *—PTI*
*>>>More on Page 4*

## Nigerian ingests ₹ 10 cr worth drug, held at KIA

**BENGALURU, 31 JULY**

A Nigerian woman who had ingested narcotic drugs valued at Rs 10 crore has been arrested, an official in the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence said on Wednesday. DRI personnel had specific intelligence inputs about the woman, who had arrived at the Kempegowda International Airport on July 26 from Dubai, that she was possessing drugs, the official said. The passenger was intercepted and, on sustained interrogation, admitted that she had ingested contraband in the form of capsules, DRI sources said. She was produced before a judge for the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances cases for permission to conduct a medical examination and extract the capsules from her stomach. "A total of 57 capsules have been purged. The contents of the capsules have tested positive for cocaine. —*PTI*

## Minister's wife records statement against BJP MLA

**BENGALURU, 31 JULY**

Karnataka Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao's wife Tabassum Rao recorded her statement against former Union Minister and BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal before a special court on Wednesday. She had filed a criminal defamation case against Yatnal on April six this year after Vijayapura BJP MLA had, referring to the Minister's inter-religious marriage to her, allegedly said that Congress leader's house is "half Pakistan." On Wednesday, the 42nd Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court Judge N Shivakumar recorded her sworn-in statement. The court listed the matter for hearing on 7 and 8 August. —*PTI*

## Mangaluru bus driver, conductor save girl's life

**MANGALURU, 31 JULY**

In a dashing display of compassion, a city bus driver in Mangaluru saved the life of a young passenger on Wednesday. The 13F bus was on a routine trip in the city and when passing through Kulur town, a young student travelling in it complained of chest pain. Bus driver Mahesh Poojary and conductor Suresh immediately rushed the girl to a nearby hospital in Kankanady. Using the bus horn as a siren, the driver rushed through the traffic and arrived at the hospital that was six kilometres away in just six minutes after the passenger raised the alarm. Even as the driver pulled into the hospital, the conductor rushed out to get the paramedics to rush to the aid of the passenger. Thanks to his quick thinking, the girl was immediately given treatment. According to the hospital officials, the girl is out of danger. Withholding the identity of the passenger for personal reasons, the officials said further investigations are going on. —*PTI*

## 2 M'luru gangsters nabbed; weapons, drugs seized

**MANGALURU, 31 JULY**

Mangaluru Central Crime Branch (CCB) Police have arrested two notorious gangsters, who were allegedly planning to commit crimes in the city. The police also recovered illegal pistol, a revolver, live ammunition and drugs from them. According to Mangaluru Police Commissioner Anupam Agarwal, the CCB police received information that two accomplices of gangster Kali Yogeesh, who is hiding abroad, were carrying illegal weapons and drugs, and were travelling in a car. Mohammad Hanif, also known as Ali Munna, 40, and Mohammad Rafiq, also known as Mudipu Rafiq, 36, were intercepted and a pistol, one revolver, 12 live rounds of ammunition, 42gm of narcotic MDMA, an Innova car, three mobile phones, and a digital weighing scale were seized from them. The estimated value of the seized property is Rs 10 lakh. Hanif, was involved in 14 cases, including a shootout at the Sanjeeva Shetty store in Mangaluru city, —*PTI*

# IN SETBACK TO BJP, JD(S) PULLS OUT OF FOOT MARCH

### HDK says BJP picking ex-Hassan MLA to lead protest was wrong

**BENGALURU, 31 JULY**

JD(S) on Wednesday pulled out of the proposed foot march against the alleged irregularities in the distribution of sites by the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA), including to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's wife, as party leader H D Kumaraswamy hit out at the BJP.

The Union Minister said that his party was not taken into confidence on the foot march and lashed out at the BJP for picking former BJP MLA from Hassan Preetham Gowda to lead the protest.

"Who is that Preetham Gowda ? Preetham Gowda ventured to finish off the family of Deve Gowda. They (BJP) call a meeting with him (Preetham Gowda to discuss preparations for the march) and ask me to

HD Kumaraswamy *PHOTO: PTI*

sit next to him...the person who put poison to my family.. Who is responsible for distribution of pen-drives? There is a limit to my tolerance."

Kumaraswamy also ruled out the JD(S) extending "moral support" to BJP vis-a-vis the foot march.

JD(S), headed by former prime minister HD Deve Gowda, joined BJP-led NDA last year. The two parties fought the recent Lok Sabha elections in the State together. —*PTI*

## Governor seeks response from CM on MUDA 'scam'

**BENGALURU, 31 JULY**

IGovernor Thaawar Chand Gehlot has sought a "response" from Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to allegations relating to the distribution of sites by the Mysuru Urban Development Authority, including to his wife Parvathi, sources in the Congress government said on Wednesday.

The move comes after a delegation of BJP legislators met Governor on 25 July and submitted to him a memorandum seeking transfer of the MUDA case to CBI for a probe and resignation of Chief Minister.

Referring to the Governor's action, Home Minister G Parameshwara said there is reason to believe that it was politically motivated.

"The Governor has moved further to issue a show cause notice," he added. Information Technology and Biotechnology Minister Priyank Kharge alleged that the Governor is being "misused" by BJP.

"You have seen Governors in Tamil Nadu, earlier in Maharashtra and West Bengal. In some places these Governors are misusing their Constitutional position. Even Supreme Court has made its observations," Kharge said. —*PTI*

**FORM C MANDATORY**

## City ups rules for foreigners in PG

**BENGALURU, 31 JULY**

The Bengaluru City Police have introduced a new regulation requiring Paying Guest (PG) and guesthouse owners to obtain a neighbour consent letter, formatted as FORM C, for all foreign nationals residing in their properties. This move aims to strengthen monitoring and documentation of foreign residents in the city.

City Commissioner B Dayananda announced the enforcement on Wednesday, citing Section 7 of the Foreigners Act. This section mandates owners and operators of PGs, guesthouses, residences, and similar accommodations to register all foreign occupants on the Indian Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) online portal (indianfrro.gov.in). The details must then be submitted to the nearest police station.

"This action is being taken to address concerns about potential criminal activity or drug trafficking involving foreign nationals," a senior police officer told **Salar News**.

"The new regulation places the responsibility on property owners to verify the backgrounds and details of their foreign tenants, ensuring they are properly documented and monitored."

In 2022, the city police issued an advisory urging house owner to verify the backgrounds of potential foreign tenants before renting out their properties. This advisory came in response to a rise in drug cases involving foreign nationals. —*Salar News*

## City 'drowns' in heavy rains

**BENGALURU, 31 JULY**

The Sillicon City turned into a waterlogged mess on Wednesday as torrential rains lashed the city, causing widespread traffic chaos and flooding.

Commuters were left stranded as roads transformed into rivers, near Hebbal Police Station and PG Halli.

Areas such as Sadashivanagar and Seshadripuram experienced heavy rains, while Cantonment, Rajajinagar, Malleswaram, Shivajinagar, Ulsoor, Vasanth Nagar, Whitefield, Kalyan Nagar, Hebbal, Jalahalli, Peenya, Vidyaranyapura, and Yeshwanthpur witnessed light to moderate showers.

The also impacted Banashankari, Arekere, Begur, Gottigere, Hulimavu, Basaveshwaranagar, Kamakshipalya, Kengeri, Mahalakshmi Layout, Nandini Layout, Nayandahalli, Rajajinagar, Rajarajeshwari Nagar, and Vijayanagar. Kempegowda International Airport (KIAL) also experienced rainfall.

A red alert has been issued for Coastal Karnataka and South Interior Karnataka, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) predicting extremely heavy rainfall in these regions until August 1.

A landslide occurred on the Bangalore-Mangalore National Highway near Dodtappalu village under Sakaleshpur rural police station, causing obstruction to the highway traffic on Wednesday. —*Salar News*

## HC on Darshan's plea says healthy diet a right for all

**BENGALURU, 31 JULY**

The Karnataka High Court emphasised on Wednesday that all citizens and undertrial prisoners are entitled to a nutritious diet, without any distinctions based on their social or financial status.

This observation was made by Justice M Nagaprasanna while hearing a petition filed by Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa, who is jailed in the Renukaswamy murder case.

Darshan had challenged a Magistrate court order that rejected his request for homecooked food, bedding, and cutlery in prison. Senior advocate Prabhuling K Navadgi, representing Thoogudeepa, argued that the actor required nutritional food as indicated by a medical certificate.

Justice Nagaprasanna said, "If he needs a special diet due to health issues, doctors will provide it. This is not just about Darshan; every citizen or undertrial prisoner has the right to nutritious food. Distinctions cannot be made based on one's status." —*PTI*

## KARNATAKA'S BIO-ECONOMY REACHES $31B

**BENGALURU, 31 JULY**

Karnataka's bio-economy reached USD 31 billion in 2023 and is growing at 10.7 per cent from USD 28 billion in 2022, said the Karnataka Bio-economy Report-2024, which was unveiled on Wednesday.

The State attracted over 30 per cent of national biotech investments in 2023, contributing 21 per cent to India's bio-economy. Also, it contributes nearly 10 to 12 per cent of Karnataka's economy of USD 310 billion, the report said.

Information Technology and Biotechnology Minister Priyank Kharge unveiled the Karnataka Bio-economy Report 2024, which was brought out by the Karnataka Innovation and Technology Society (KITS) of the state government in collaboration with the Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises (ABLE).

Meanwhile, Sansera Engineering Limited on Wednesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Karnataka government to expand Sansera's manufacturing capacity in Ramanagara with an investment of Rs 2,100 crore.

The facility at Harohalli, Ramanagara is expected to drive growth in both the automotive and non-automotive sectors. The new facility is expected to boost Sansera's manufacturing capacity by approximately Rs 3,000 crore —*PTI*

## CBI QUIZZES JAIHIND'S MD IN CASE AGAINST DKS

**BENGALURUW, 31 JULY**

CBI has summoned Managing Director of the Congress-run Jaihind TV channel in Bengaluru and recorded his statement in the disproportionate assets case against senior party leader and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar.

BS Shiju, MD of the Kerala-based news channel said he appeared before CBI officials

CBI issued a fresh notice to the channel on 19 July days after Supreme Court dismissed a petition filed by Shivakumar, challenging CBI's FIR against him in the disproportionate assets case.

"Shivakumarji invested in our channel. There is no illegality involved," Shiju, also a Congress leader in Kerala, told PTI. "Neither Shivakumarji's wife nor children have any investment in the channel," Shiju said. —*PTI*

## Malayalee groups in City come together for Wayanad

**BENGALURU, 31 JULY**

Bangalore Malayalee Committee has launched a relief campaign to assist those affected by the landslides in Wayanad. They are collecting essential relief items and they are scheduled to be delivered to Collector's Office in Wayanad on Thursday.

On Wednesday, a donation campaign was organised across the City, attracting nearly 500 people who contributed essential items. The donations included rice, dal, baby food, clothes, sanitary pads, diapers and essential medicines.

Kalpetta's Joint Block Development Officer (BDO) Paul Verghese told Salar News that while the rescue centres have received sufficient food supplies from across Kerala, reaching remote areas remains a challenge. Reports indicate that some individuals are still stranded in these areas, complicating efforts to deliver essential items and track those in need.

The weather in Wayanad continues to pose challenges, with heavy rains impacting

Rescue work underway in Wayanad on Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

rescue operations. The BDO official said Mundakkai, Chooralmala and Attamala are at high risk, with nearly 20 families awaiting rescue.

According to data received by Salar News from the Wayanad Collector's Office, 45 relief camps have been established in the district, housing 3,069 people. Across Kerala, a total of 118 relief camps have been set up, accommodating 5,531 inmates. —*Salar News*

**CABINET TO CONSIDER**

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a meeting, in New Delhi, on Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

# DKS to PM: Give funds for irrigation projects, City's infra

**BENGALURU, 31 JULY**

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar has formally appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, requesting additional funding for key Bengaluru infrastructure projects and State irrigation projects. After meeting with Prime Minister, Shivakumar said that there is the need for increased financial support to address the City's growing infrastructure challenges and State's development."

In a letter addressed to Prime Minister, Shivakumar outlined the urgent need for funding for eight major infrastructure projects in Bengaluru, along with four significant State irrigation projects. He highlighted the necessity of a substantial Rs 36,950 crore allocation from the Central Budget for a proposed tunnel project in Bengaluru.

Shivakumar said Bengaluru contributes the second highest tax to the national exchequer but the City has "not got anything" in the recent Union budget.

Speaking at Karnataka Bhavan, Shivakumar shared that he had also requested the development of a GIFT (Gujarat International Finance Tec-City) City-like project in Bengaluru, which had not been positively considered previously.

Shivakumar expressed the importance of upgrading Bengaluru's infrastructure, given the increasing population pressure from both within and outside the State.

Regarding irrigation projects, Shivakumar discussed the requirement for Rs 53,000 crore from the Ministry of Jal Shakti for the Upper Bhadra project. Prime Minister assured Shivakumar that this matter would be addressed in the upcoming Cabinet meeting.

Additionally, Shivakumar brought up the issue of Karnataka releasing more water to Tamil Nadu in July than stipulated, and the ongoing Mahadayi River water dispute.

**DKS meets Khattar; discusses traffic, waste management**

Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Manohar Lal Khattar and Karnataka Deputy Shivakumar discussed several issues related to the state such as traffic decongestion, solid waste management and extension of the Bengaluru suburban rail project.

During a meeting with Shivakumar, Khattar assured full support for Karnataka's development, offering assistance in various initiatives, according to a statement.

Union minister also promised the allocation of buses to Karnataka under PM e-Bus Seva, enhancing the State's public transportation. —*PTI/Salar News*

CM Siddaramaiah *PHOTO: PTI*

## CM appeals to firms to donate for landslide victims

**BENGALURU, 31 JULY**

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday appealed to the corporate world to contribute generously for the relief and rehabilitation of people hit by massive landslides in Wayanad district in neighbouring Kerala. Siddaramaiah exhorted them to help rebuild the affected areas through the Corporate Social Responsibility initiative. He further said Karnataka is specifically looking for financial support to facilitate the logistics of relief operations Director of Karnataka State Disaster Management Authority, K B Shivakumar can be contacted on 9482575918 for donations. —*Salar News*

**WHAT'S COOKING IN B'LURU?**

# *Sirohi goat meat is a culinary favourite*

**MEGHANA PRASAD**
**BENGALURU, 31 JULY**

The seizure of around 2,700kg of Sirohi goat meat at KSR Bengaluru Railway Station on 26 July has highlighted the popularity of this goat breed among Bengalureans.

Initially, the meat was suspected to be dog meat, sparking controversy. However, the Karnataka Food Safety and Standards Department and DNA analysis conducted by the National Meat Research Institute in Hyderabad confirmed it was mutton. The Sirohi goat, commonly found in Rajasthan and the Kutch-Bhuj areas of Gujarat, has slightly elongated tails and spots that can be mistaken for those of dogs.

Sirohi goat meat is as popular as that of the Bannur and Jamunapari breeds. Tabrez Khan, owner of Giddu Mutton Stall, Pattareddy Palya, Kanakapura Main Road, told Salar News "We usually get only two kinds of goats here — Bannur and Sirohi. People usually prefer Sirohi meat due to its quantity and taste. Out of 50 customers coming for mutton daily, about half choose Sirohi meat, and sometimes, we even run out of it."

The price of Sirohi goat meat ranges from Rs 370 to Rs 500 per kilogram, and a live goat costs between Rs 7,500 and Rs 12,000. In comparison, Bannur goat meat, which is often priced higher due to its local popularity, costs between Rs 450 and Rs 600 per kg, and a live goat can cost between Rs 10,000 and Rs 15,000. Jamunapari goats are relatively cheaper, with meat prices ranging from Rs 350 to Rs 480 per kilogram, and a live goat costing between Rs 6,000 and Rs 10,000.

The meat of the Sirohi goat is soft and flavourful compared to other varieties, said Manjunatha Lingappa, a caretaker at Namma Goat Farm near Nettigere Gate, Kanakapura Main Road. "It is tender and has the right amount of fat and flesh, making it juicy and preventing it from drying out during the cooking." In contrast, Bannur and Jamunapari goats have tighter muscles, which make their meat dry and chewy, he said.

Sirohi goats gain weight quickly on a normal diet. "The Sirohi goat's cylindrical body shape indicates a higher meat yield compared to other breeds. The males can weigh up to 50kg, and females up to 23kg," Khan said. Bannur bucks weigh around 35-40kg, while does weigh 20-25kg. Jamunapari male goats weigh up to 45kg and female ones up to 30kg.

Originating from the Sirohi district of Rajasthan, the Sirohi goat is reared for both meat and milk. It is identified by its brown spots and medium-sized tail. The breed is exceptionally well-adapted to India's diverse climatic conditions, particularly the dry tropical desert climate of Rajasthan. . —*Salar News*

## Rail-track repairs amplify after Yedakumeri landslide

**BENGALURU, 31 JULY**

Amidst the severe weather conditions, the South Western Railway (SWR) has intensified its efforts to restore the track affected by a landslide between Yedakumari and Kadagaravalli stations, disrupting the services for some of the major trains that pass through these stations like-KSR Bengaluru to Kannur, KSR Bengaluru to Karwar, Yesvantpur to Karwar, Yesvantpur to Mangaluru Junction.

The restoration work, crucial for resuming normal train services, is progressing despite the challenges posed by heavy rainfall and difficult terrain.

The team has successfully unloaded 94 wagons of boulders at the site, with an additional 65 wagons currently being loaded or in transit.

This is part of the larger goal to unload 1,900 Cubic Meters (cu m) of boulders, with another 2,000 cu m still needed to complete the restoration.

The SWR has also delivered 93,200 sandbags out of the required 1,00,000, with the remaining bags expected to arrive from Mysuru shortly. In addition, 26 barrels of diesel have been utilised from the total supply of 26 barrels, ensuring that machinery operations can continue smoothly.

3 cameras have been installed to monitor progress in real-time from the WAR room at the SWR headquarters in Hubballi.

Chief Public Relations Officer of South Western Railway Manjunath Kanamadi said, "The dedication and hard work of our employees is commendable, and we are committed to overcoming these challenges as quickly as possible to resume normal train services." —*Salar News*

PHOTO: PTI

## BJD leader Mamata Mohanta resigns from Rajya Sabha

**NEW DELHI, 31 JULY**

BJD leader Mamata Mohanta has resigned from her Rajya Sabha membership, which has been accepted by the chairman of the Upper House on Wednesday. Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar said he received the resignation letter on Wednesday from Mohanta. "She has resigned her seat by writing to the chairman under her hand and handed personally to me. The same I find to be constitutionally in order. I have accepted the resignation of Shrimati Mamata Mohanta, member representing the state of Odisha, with immediate effect," Dhankhar said. *—PTI*

## Court extends Kejri, Sisodia, Kavitha's custody

**NEW DELHI, 31 JULY**

A court here on Wednesday extended till 13 August the judicial custody of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his former deputy Manish Sisodia in a money laundering case related to the alleged excise scam. Special Judge Kaveri Baweja also extended the custody of BRS leader K Kavitha till then in the case. The judge further extended the judicial custody of Sisodia and Kavitha in a related corruption case, being probed by the CBI, till 9 August. The court passed the order after the accused were produced before it on expiry of their judicial custody granted earlier. The court had on 25 July extended the judicial custody of Kejriwal in the money laundering case till 31 July. Supreme Court had earlier granted interim bail to Kejriwal in the ED case. However, he continues to be lodged in Tihar jail here as he has not furnished the bail bond in the case. *—PTI*

## HC seeks DMK MLAs reply over Gutkha row

**CHENNAI, 31 JULY**

Madras High Court on Wednesday asked Chief Minister MK Stalin and a few other DMK MLAs to submit their respective explanation to the show cause notices issued by the Privilege Committee in 2017 for displaying banned gutkha sachets in Tamil Nadu Assembly, when they were in the Opposition. DMK MLAs had then displayed the sachets to claim they were available freely during the then AIADMK regime. Allowing a batch of appeals from the Secretary, Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly, a division bench comprising Justices SM Subramaniam and C Kumarappan set aside the order of a single judge, which set aside the show cause notices issued by the Privilege Committee. The notice issued by the Privilege Committee was relating to disciplinary affairs of the House. *—PTI*

## ED raids HP Cong MLA in Ayushman Bharat fraud case

**SHIMLA, 31 JULY**

Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday raided the premises of Himachal Pradesh Congress MLA RS Bali, some private hospitals and their promoters as part of a money laundering probe linked to the alleged Ayushman Bharat scheme fraud, officials said. About 19 locations in Shimla, Kangra, Una, Mandi and Kullu districts of the state apart from those in Delhi, Chandigarh and Punjab are being searched since morning, they said. Sharma, according to the officials, is a "close associate" of Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu. Bali is also the chairman of Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation and the vice-chairman of the Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Board. *—PTI*

Members in the Lok Sabha during the Monsoon session of Parliament, in New Delhi, on Wednesday PHOTO: PTI

# BJP, Cong spar over caste row in Parl

## BJP asks, what's wrong in asking RaGa's caste

**NEW DELHI, 31 JULY**

BJP on Wednesday flayed the Congress for escalating the caste row and said what's wrong in asking Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi's caste when he can ask about the castes of others, including the government officials, judges and even journalists.

In the same vein, however, the ruling party clarified that Anurag Thakur did not ask about Gandhi's caste while speaking on the Union Budget in the Lok Sabha and wondered why the Leader of Opposition took an offence and called it an insult to him when none of the other members raised any objection to the former Union minister's remarks.

Participating in the discussion on the Union Budget, Thakur had made certain remarks on Tuesday that were expunged from the proceedings of the House. His apparent reference about Gandhi's caste during the discussion had caused a massive uproar in the Lower House.

The Lok Sabha witnessed noisy scenes on Wednesday as Opposition members sought an apology from BJP leader Anurag Thakur over his remarks on Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi and persisted with their demand for a caste census. *—PTI*

### Bill introduced to replace Aircraft Act

A bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha to overhaul India's civil aviation regulations by replacing the 90-year-old Aircraft Act. It was introduced amid protests from a section of the Opposition over Hindi nomenclature of the draft legislation. *—PTI*

## BUDGET BALANCED, TAKES CARE OF ALL SEGMENTS: FM

**NEW DELHI, 31 JULY**

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday said the Union Budget strikes a fine balance between growth, employment, and fiscal consolidation, and promotes cooperative federalism.

Replying to the discussion on the Union Budget 2024-25 and Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir Budget in Rajya Sabha, the minister said the government is on track to achieve the pre-announced fiscal deficit target of 4.5 per cent by 2025-26.

Sitharaman, also a former defence minister, said the Agniveer Scheme to recruit people in the age group of 17.5 to 21 years, is aimed at keeping the armed forces fit, young and battle-ready.

The minister, who presented her seventh Union Budget, also said the economic document proposes unflinching support for cooperative federalism.

"I would like to underline that our unflinching commitment to cooperative federalism. The total resources proposed to be transferred to the states in 2024-25 are estimated at Rs 22.91 lakh crore. This actually entails an increase of Rs 2.49 lakh crore over 2023-24," the minister said.

On criticism that she only referred to two states in her budget speech and ignored the rest, Sitharaman said the budget is for all states, in past also, including the UPA era, the names of all states were not mentioned. She emphasised that if a state has not been mentioned in the speech, it does not mean there is no allocation for it. *—PTI*

# Oppn MPs raise concern over railway accidents

**NEW DELHI, 31 JULY**

- The Lower House discussed the Demand for Grants for the railways ministry. As it discussed the allocations for the Indian Railways, several members also presented their demands for railway lines in their areas

The Lok Sabha MPs of Opposition parties on Wednesday expressed their concern over the increase in number of train accidents in the country while those of the treasury benches lauded the government's efforts to expand the railway network.

The Lower House discussed the Demand for Grants for the railways ministry. As it discussed the allocations for the Indian Railways, several members also presented their demands for railway lines in their areas.

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) MP from Aurangabad, Abhay Kumar Sinha, said the recent rail accidents indicate there are many shortcomings which need to be looked at.

"Recent accidents tell us that there are many shortcomings which need to be improved. Since Independence, only 18 per cent of new railway tracks have been laid. Every year, 275 km expansion has happened, which is very little," he said.

"It should be increased, more railway tracks should be laid down, and old tracks should be repaired so that accidents can be stopped," he said.

Sinha also said during the tenure of Lalu Prasad as the railways minister, the Indian Railways was earning profits and the whole world was talking about it.

India is working on developing bullet trains in the country with indigenous technology, Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Wednesday.

He said in the Lok Sabha that the bullet train project, first of which is under construction between Ahmedabad and Mumbai, is very complex technologically and is being implemented with the help of Japan. *—PTI*

Union Railway Minister AshwinI Vaishnaw speaks during the Lok Sabha monsoon session in Parliament, New Delhi PHOTO: PTI

# Sonia warns Cong leaders against complacency

**NEW DELHI, 31 JULY**

With assembly polls in key states coming up, Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi on Wednesday said the "mahaul (public mood)" is in the party's favour but cautioned against complacency and over confidence after the goodwill generated for it in the Lok Sabha elections.

Gandhi claimed that the Modi government had not drawn the right lessons from "their significant decline" in the Lok Sabha elections and alleged that it was persisting with its policy of "dividing communities and spreading an atmosphere of fear and animosity".

"Fortunately, Supreme Court intervened at the right time," she said in an apparent reference to the stay on the orders passed by Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand government asking eateries along Kanwar Yatra route to display the name of owners.

Noting that elections will be held in four states, she urged party leaders to sustain the momentum and goodwill that had been generated for the party in elections. Gandhi also extend deepest condolences to the families bereaved by the horrendous calamity that has overtaken Wayanad.

"Apart from natural disasters, our people continue to lose their lives in railway accidents that are caused by mismanagement," Gandhi added. *—PTI*

# Junk 18% GST on health insurance: Gadkari to FM

**NEW DELHI, 31 JULY**

Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari has requested Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to withdraw the 18 per cent goods and services tax (GST) on life and medical insurance premiums.

In his letter to the Finance Minister, Gadkari raised concerns of the Nagpur Division Life Insurance Corporation Employees Union, which had submitted to him a memorandum regarding the issues of the insurance industry.

Referring to the memo, he said, "Levying GST on life insurance premiums amounts to levying tax on the uncertainties of life. The Union feels that the person who covers the risk of life's uncertainties to give protection to the family should not be levied tax on the premium to purchase cover against this risk."

Nitin Gadkari PHOTO: PTI

Further, he added that the main issue raised by the union is related to the withdrawal of GST on life and medical insurance premiums.

Both life insurance and medical insurance premiums are subject to an 18 per cent GST rate.

He further said, "Similarly, 18 per cent GST on medical insurance premiums is proving to be a deterrent for the growth of this segment of business which is socially necessary."

- Karti Chidambaram said he is glad that Gadkari urged the finance minister to remove GST on insurance, and said he had also made the same suggestion in Lok Sabha

"In view of the above, you are requested to consider the suggestion of withdrawal of GST on life and medical insurance premium on priority as it becomes cumbersome for senior citizens as per rules with due verification," he added.

Congress MP Karti Chidambaram said he is glad that Gadkari urged the finance minister to remove GST on insurance, and said he had also made the same suggestion in Lok Sabha during the Budget debate.

"I am very happy that Cabinet Minister Mr Gadkari has endorsed my demand that I made yesterday on the floor of the House to remove the 18 per cent GST levied on Health and Life Insurance premium," Chidambaram said.

"We are a very under-insured country, and we must encourage people to insure themselves. By levying GST you are making the premiums expensive. You must treat insurance not only as a social cover but also as a mode of saving. So they should remove the GST," he said. He also shared on X a video of his speech made in Lok Sabha on Tuesday, where he demanded for the GST on insurance to be removed. *—PTI*

# Cong to contest Delhi polls alone, rules out alliance with AAP

**NEW DELHI, 31 JULY**

Congress will contest Delhi Assembly polls alone, DPCC president Devender Yadav said, adding the party suffered loss in the Lok Sabha elections due to alliance with Aam Aadmi Party (AAP).

In an interview with PTI on Tuesday, Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee (DPCC) chief said the party also plans to take out a 'Delhi Jodo Yatra' on the lines of 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' to reach out to people in the city.

"The alliance (with AAP) was done in the larger interest of the nation but now that we evaluated, we feel it somewhere caused loss to us," Yadav said.

Delhi Congress President Devender Yadav along with supporters protest against Power Purchase Agreement Charge tariff hike, in New Delhi PHOTO: ANI

"After the Lok Sabha elections, Congress has decided that it will fight the assembly polls alone. We are working on various programmes, whether it is strengthening the organisation or outreach programmes. 'Delhi Jodo Yatra' will be a part of these initiatives," he said. *—PTI*

# India, China hold talks on Ladakh standoff

**NEW DELHI, 31 JULY**

India and China on Wednesday held "constructive" and "forward-looking" diplomatic talks to resolve the over four-year border standoff along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh but there was clear no indication of any breakthrough.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said restoration of peace and tranquillity, and respect for the LAC are "essential basis" for restoration of normalcy in bilateral relations.

The talks, held in Delhi under the framework of Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC), came days after External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar held a bilateral meeting with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Vientiane, the capital of Lao PDR.

The MEA described the discussion at the meeting as "in-depth, constructive and forward-looking", adding both sides agreed on the need to jointly uphold peace and tranquillity on the ground in accordance with relevant bilateral agreements and protocols.

However, there was no clear indication of a breakthrough in the talks. The Chinese delegation was led by Hong Liang, Director General of the Boundary and Oceanic Department of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Liang also called on Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, according to the MEA. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

## TELANGANA TO BUILD AI HUB NEAR HYD OUTSKIRTS

**HYDERABAD, 31 JULY**

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Wednesday said a 'fourth city', after Hyderabad, Secunderabad and Cyberabad here, would come up at Mucharla on the city outskirts with an AI and health tourism hub, sports, and others being developed there on a grand scale.

Speaking in Legislative Assembly during a debate on the Appropriation Bill, 2024, he said the 'fourth city' would be the 'future city'.

"After Hyderabad, Secunderabad city, Cyberabad city, we are going to establish a 'fourth city' at Mucharla," he said.

While Hyderabad and Secunderabad are known as twin cities, the IT hub at Gachibowli in the Telangana capital is known as Cyberabad.

The proposed 'fourth city' would be promoted as an attractive investment destination in the world, he said. It would also be connected by metro rail.

The new 'city' would be a hub of medical treatment, skill development, international cricket tournaments, golf club and employment avenues, he said.

Reddy said he has also spoken to BCCI to establish a cricket stadium of world standards as part of the plans. *—PTI*

**NEW RESHUFFLE**

# *New Governors take up charge in 7 states*

**MUMBAI/ JAIPUR, IMPHAL/ RAIPUR, GANGTOK/ RANCHI/ CHANDIGARH, 31 JULY**

CP Radhakrishnan was sworn in as the Governor of Maharashtra on Wednesday evening.

He was administered the oath of office and secrecy by the Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court, Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya.

Radhakrishnan, the 21st governor of Maharashtra since the state was formed in 1960, succeeds Ramesh Bais.

Haribhau Kisanrao Bagde took oath as the Governor of Rajasthan. Rajasthan Chief Justice Manindra Mohan Srivastava administered the oath of office to Bagde, who took the oath of governor in the name of God in Hindi.

Newly appointed Maharashtra Governor CP Radhakrishnan with Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Deputy Chief Ministers during his swearing-in ceremony, in Mumbai, on Wednesday PHOTO: PTI

Lakshman Prasad Acharya sworn in as the governor of Manipur. Acharya was administered the oath of office by Chief Justice of Manipur High Court Siddharth Mridul during a function at the Raj Bhavan.

Ramen Deka took oath as the 10th Governor of Chhattisgarh. Senior BJP leader Om Prakash Mathur took oath as the 16th governor of Sikkim.

Former Union minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar sworn in as the 12th governor of Jharkhand. Acting Chief Justice of Jharkhand High Court Sujit Narayan Prasad administered the oath of office to Gangwar.

BJP veteran Gulab Chand Kataria sworn in as the Governor of Punjab and Administrator Chandigarh. Punjab and Haryana High Court Chief Justice Sheel Nagu administered the oath of office to Kataria. *—PTI*

## UP Vidhan Sabha flooded after rain spell

**LUCKNOW, 31 JULY**

Heavy rainfall on Wednesday afternoon flooded parts of the Uttar Pradesh Vidhan Sabha building, where the Monsoon session of the state Assembly is now on. The two-hour spell of rain led to waterlogging in several parts of the state capital, including around the Vidhan Bhavan. There was waterlogging at the building's entrance normally used by MLAs, and there was flooding in the corridor and some rooms on the ground floor. Staff used buckets and mops to clear away the water. The situation triggered some caustic comments from the Opposition. "The state Assembly needs the budget the most. If this is the condition after a single spell of heavy rain, then the rest of the state is at the mercy of God," Samajwadi Party general secretary and MLA Shivpal Singh Yadav said.The chambers where the state legislative assembly and the legislative councils hold their sessions were not affected. *—PTI*

## Chinese ship detained in Odisha following HC order

**PARADIP, 31 JULY**

The Paradip Port Trust authorities in Odisha have detained a Chinese cargo ship following the "arrest" order of the vessel by the High Court over a monetary dispute, an official said on Wednesday. Under admiralty law, a ship can be arrested for the enforcement of maritime claims that arise out of the ownership, construction, possession, management, operation, or trading of any ship. The Orissa High Court order came following a monetary dispute between the owner of the ship and the company that had dispatched the cargo - low sulfur marine gasoil. The ship will remain detained at the port until further orders. The company which sent the cargo submitted before the high court that the ship's owner failed to pay Rs 99.81 lakh to it. After reviewing the submitted documents and arguments, the court passed the arrest order on Monday. *—PTI*

## SC confirms order staying release of gangster Gawli

**NEW DELHI, 31 JULY**

"So ja beta, nahi toh Gabbar aa jayega." Quoting the oft-remembered dialogue from the blockbuster "Sholay", the Supreme Court on Wednesday "confirmed" its earlier order staying the premature release of gangster-turned-politician Arun Gawli who is serving life imprisonment in a murder case. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Dipankar Datta made absolute its 3 June order staying the operation of the 5 April order of the Bombay High Court's Nagpur bench and posted the appeals for hearing on 20 November. The High Court had directed state authorities to consider Gawli's application for premature release under the 2006 remission policy. At the outset, senior advocate Raja Thakare, appearing for the Maharashtra government, submitted that Gawli has over 46 cases. *—PTI*

## Kanwariya killed as generator falls on him in UP

**MUZAFFARNAGAR, 31 JULY**

A Kanwariya was killed and eight others were injured when a generator kept atop the driver's cabin of a truck following them fell over them in the Ratanpuri area here on Wednesday, police said. Several groups of Kanwariyas often take along a truck with them that carry their belongings and other items required in their journey. Circle Office (CO) of the area Gajendra Pal said, "One Dinesh, 24, a Kanwariya, was killed after a generator kept over a truck following them fell over him allegedly when the driver applied the brakes suddenly. Eight other Kanwariyas were injured in the incident." The incident occurred near Bensi cut. The injured have been admitted to a hospital. The driver of the truck fled the spot after the incident, the police said they are investigating the matter. *—PTI*

An injured being shifted using ropeway as rescue operations are underway after landslides triggered by heavy monsoon rains, at Chooralmala in Wayanad; An affected area following the landslides on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

# Landslide turns vibrant places to ghost towns

## Rescuers fight odds and evacuate 1,000; officials scramble to account the missing

**WAYANAD, 31 JULY**

Flattened buildings, mud-filled potholes and cracked land dotted with huge boulders-- these were the scenes at Mundakkai junction and nearby Chooralmala Town in Kerala's Wayanad on Wednesday.

Before the massive landslides devastated parts of the hill district in the small hours of Tuesday, the places were nerve centres of activities for people living in those areas.

The tiny junction in Mundakkai and the moderate town in Chooralmala had been dotted by shops and concrete structures.

Tiny makeshift bridges were erected over swollen rivers and excavators were engaged non-stop in removing piles of debris and boulders, with rescue missions continuing in the landslide-hit hamlets of Wayanad on Wednesday.

Rescue operators, including Army personnel, NDRF, state emergency service personnel, and local people, were fighting all odds to carry out the tough mission even as rain continued to lash several areas.

Army says that it has recovered around 70 bodies and rescued nearly 1,000 people so far.

District authorities started collecting data to determine the number of people missing following the massive tragedy, as rescue operations resumed to trace persons suspected to be trapped. A special team at the District Emergency Operation Centre is compiling data on the number of people residing in the area, those found after the landslide, and the number of persons missing, a district administration official told reporters early Wednesday.

Kerala has decided to set up a medical point with oxygen ambulances at the control room in Chooralmala to provide immediate medical assistance to those rescued from the landslide-hit areas. *—PTI*

## Grieving families perform last rites of loved ones

**WAYANAD, 31 JULY**

Heart-rending wails of grief and despair were heard as family members identified and performed the last rites of their loved ones who died in the massive landslides in this district, where over 132 people were killed and more than 200 were injured in the tragic incident

People of all ages were seen crying inconsolably as they identified the bodies of loved ones, lined one after another in coffin refrigerators at the Meppadi Family Health Centre and the Nilambur Government Hospital, or took one last fond look at them.

Similar scenes were also seen where remains were buried or cremated close to one another.

> **To deal with this kind of massive tragedy, we need help from every side. So, I hope people will display the same generosity, concern and sensitivity towards these victims in Wayanad**
>
> -Arif Mohammed Khan, Kerala Governor

At the Meppadi Juma Masjid here, a member of the mosque committee said arrangements have been made to bury the bodies.

"As and when the remains are identified and brought here, they will be buried. Arrangements for that have been made, Everyone is helping out," the committee member said.

*—PTI*

## Kerala Health Minister meets with accident en route to Wayanad

**MALAPPURAM, 31 JULY**

**PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

Kerala Health Minister Veena George was involved in an accident near Manjeri here on Wednesday morning while she was travelling to the landslide-hit Wayanad district to coordinate the rescue operations there. According to police, the accident occurred around 7.10 am when the minister's vehicle reportedly hit a two-wheeler. The minister was taken to the government medical college in Manjeri, police said, adding that her condition was not serious. *—PTI*

Students protest over the deaths of three civil services aspirants due to drowning at a coaching centre in New Delhi on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

## Police evict students protesting UPSC aspirants' deaths

**NEW DELHI, 31 JULY**

The Delhi Police on Wednesday removed a few students from a protest site in Rajinder Nagar, where hundreds have been demonstrating to seek justice following the deaths of three civil services aspirants at Rau's IAS Study Circle.

According to a police officer, over a dozen individuals were removed from the protest site as they were identified as "outsiders" and not students of any coaching institute.

Meanwhile, a delegation of UPSC aspirants met MCD Commissioner Ashwani Kumar at the agency headquarters here on Wednesday amid protests that have erupted following the death of three students at a coaching centre in the national capital.

The students have approached Kumar to discuss the poor safety measures at several coaching centres that pose a threat to their lives, among other issues.

The meeting is currently underway, a civic body official said.

The protest to seek justice for the three students who died at the coaching centre on July 27, which has seen participation from more than 400 civil services aspirants, has been ongoing since Sunday under heavy police deployment.

The students are demanding better facilities and are adamant about keeping the issue non-political.

They have alleged that certain 'outsiders' have been attempting to disrupt their cause by raising political slogans at the protest site. *—PTI*

**DEBARRED FROM EXAMS**

## Amid row, UPSC cancels Puja Khedkar's candidature

**NEW DELHI, 31 JULY**

**PHOTO: X**

The UPSC on Wednesday said it has cancelled the provisional candidature of probationary IAS officer Puja Khedkar and debarred her from all future examinations or selections.

"The UPSC has examined the available records carefully and found her guilty of acting in contravention of the provisions of the CSE-2022 Rules," the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) said in a statement.

It said her provisional candidature for the CSE-2022 (Civil Services Examination-2022) has been "cancelled" and she has also been "debarred permanently" from all future UPSC examinations or selections. The commission said a show cause notice (SCN) was issued to Puja Manorama Dilip Khedkar on 18 July for "fraudulently" availing attempts beyond the permissible limit in the examination by "faking" her identity.

Meanwhile, a Delhi court is likely to pronounce on August 1 its order on the anticipatory bail plea of IAS probationer Puja Khedkar, accused in a case of cheating and forgery.

Additional Sessions Judge Devender Kumar Jangala on Wednesday reserved the order after hearing arguments on the application filed by Khedkar.

Additional Sessions Judge Devender Kumar Jangala reserved the order after hearing arguments on the application filed by Khedkar, who claimed that she has "imminent threat of arrest". *—PTI*

# HC pulls up MCD over UPSC centres

**NEW DELHI, 31 JULY**

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday pulled up authorities over the deaths of three UPSC aspirants who drowned in the basement of a coaching centre, saying such tragedies are bound to happen when there is no collection of taxes due to a "freebies culture".

A bench headed by Acting Chief Justice Manmohan said a "strange probe" was going on with police action against the passerby who drove a car but no action against MCD officials.

The court said multi-storey buildings were being allowed to operate but there was no proper drainage.

"You want to have freebies culture, don't want to collect taxes... this is bound to happen," the bench, also comprising Justice Tushar Rao Gedela, said.

The court was hearing a plea seeking a high-level committee to investigate the deaths of three civil service aspirants in the basement of a flooded coaching centre in Old Rajinder Nagar on the evening of 27 July. MCD Additional Commissioner Tariq Thomas on Wednesday accepted the civic body's failure in the Rajinder Nagar coaching centre deaths and said there are serious structural issues, which need to be addressed.

"My husband has not done anything wrong. I would like to refer to my husband as a victim and not an accused," says Shima, the wife of Manuj Kathuria, who has been arrested in connection with the drowning of three IAS aspirants in the flooded basement of a coaching centre.

A court here rejected the bail pleas of an SUV driver and four owners of the coaching centre basement in the Old Rajinder Nagar. "What is Delhi Police doing? Have they lost it?" wondered the Delhi High Court on Wednesday, while castigating the police for a "strange" probe by arresting an SUV driver for his alleged role in drowning of three civil services aspirants at a coaching centre here. *—PTI*

## Centre opposes mineral tax verdict

**NEW DELHI, 31 JULY**

**PHOTO: PTI**

The Centre on Wednesday opposed in the Supreme Court a plea of the mineral-rich states seeking refund of the royalty levied by it on mines and mineral-bearing land since 1989, saying any such order asking it to pay the alleged dues with retrospective effect will have a "multipolar" impact.

In a significant verdict on 25 July, a nine-judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud, by a majority 8:1 verdict, had held that the legislative power to tax mineral rights vests with the states and the royalty paid on minerals is not a tax.

The landmark verdict, which gave a huge revenue boost to mineral-rich states, however, led to another dispute with regard to the operation of the verdict.

Some Opposition-ruled mineral-bearing states urged the top court to make the verdict operational with retrospective effect so that they can seek refund of royalty from the Centre. However, the Centre opposes any such order saying it will have a "multipolar impact. Many firms involved in mining activities also support the Centre's view on refund of royalty to mineral-bearing states.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, said states like Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, wanted the judgement to be made applicable prospectively. *—PTI*

**SAYS COMMONWEALTH**

## *'India not responsible for climate crisis'*

**NEW DELHI, 31 JULY**

Patricia Scotland **PHOTO: TWITTER@COMMONWEALTHSEC**

India is not historically responsible for the climate crisis but it should not emulate polluting practices of the West from the 19th century during its development, Common wealth Secretary General Patricia Scotland has said.

Scotland said India has the opportunity to lead a just and equitable energy transition by sharing expertise and technology within the 56-nation club called Commonwealth, which represents 2.7 billion people.

She also said that India can exemplify a new, clean and safe development model that can serve as a beacon of hope for the Global South.

"India is a developing country, which was not historically responsible for creating this (climate) crisis. So, India is in a similar position to many of the Global South countries. And that is absolutely true," the Commonwealth secretary general said.

Despite not causing the crisis, she said, India is suffering from severe climate consequences, including extreme heat, floods and intense monsoons, and must take action.

"Look at the level of heat in some of the cities in India, look at the floods, look at the monsoons. Our people are suffering. So there is a responsibility on all of us, responsibility which India has committed herself to and has taken action on to make it better," Scotland said. At the 2015 UN climate talks in Paris, countries committed to limiting the global average temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial average to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. Scotland said India understands the consequences of its actions and has the opportunity to lead by creating a new and regenerative model of development. At present, India has a total installed power capacity of 446 gigawatts, with renewable energy accounting for 195 gigawatts. *—PTI*

## Gujarat court orders FIR over boycott of Muslims

**PATAN, 31 JULY**

**PHOTO: PTI**

A court in Gujarat's Patan district has ordered the registration of an FIR against a group of people for allegedly calling for an economic boycott of Muslims in a village after communal violence in July last year.

In a recent order, the court of Judicial Magistrate First Class HP Joshi directed the sub-inspector of Balisana police station to register a case on the basis of a complaint by petitioner Makbul Husen Sheikh and complete the investigation in a time-bound manner.

The petitioner had moved the court alleging that some persons in Balisana misused the "unfortunate incident of a communal riot" on July 16, 2023, to incite locals to boycott Muslims and force them out of business by cancelling the rent agreement of their shops.

The move has affected the businesses and livelihood of Muslims living in the area, and some have even been compelled to leave the place, he said in the petition.

Two groups of villagers had clashed in Balisana on the night of 16 July, 2023, over a social media post. *—PTI*

**ASSAM RIFLES AT OLYMPICS**

Canines from Assam Rifles K9 Explosive Detection team, who have been deployed at Paris 2024 Olympics for the first time, along with their handlers keep vigil near the Eiffel Tower, in Paris, France ***PHOTO: PTI***

# 'Laxity & climate change led to Wayanad disaster'

Rescue and relief operations underway following landslides triggered by heavy rain at Chooralmala, in Wayanad district ***PHOTO: PTI***

Climate change, fragile terrain and loss of forest cover created the perfect recipe for the devastating landslides in Kerala's Wayanad district that claimed more than 123 lives, according to studies conducted over the years.

Extremely heavy rain triggered a series of landslides in the hilly areas of Wayanad early Tuesday. While more than 128 people were injured, many are feared trapped under the debris.

According to the landslide atlas released by the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) National Remote Sensing Centre last year, 10 out of the 30 most landslide-prone districts in India were in Kerala, with Wayanad ranked 13th.

It said 0.09 million square kilometres in the Western Ghats and the Konkan hills (Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra) were prone to landslides.

"The vulnerability of inhabitants and households is more significant in the Western Ghats due to the very high population and household density, especially in Kerala," the report read.

A study published by Springer in 2021 said all landslide hotspots in Kerala were in the Western Ghats region and concentrated in Idukki, Ernakulam, Kottayam, Wayanad, Kozhikode and Malappuram districts.

It said about 59 per cent of total landslides in Kerala occurred in plantation areas.

A 2022 study on depleting forest cover in Wayanad showed that 62 per cent of forests in the district disappeared between 1950 and 2018 while plantation cover rose by around 1,800 per cent.

The study, published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, said around 85 per cent of the total area of Wayanad was under forest cover until the 1950s.

According to scientists, climate change was increasing the possibility of landslides in the Western Ghats, one of the eight "hottest hotspots" of biological diversity in the world.

S Abhilash, director of the Advanced Centre for Atmospheric Radar Research at Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT), told PTI that warming of the Arabian Sea was allowing the formation of deep cloud systems, leading to heavy rainfall in Kerala in a short period and increasing the possibility of landslides.

"Our research found that the southeast Arabian Sea is becoming warmer, causing the atmosphere above this region, including Kerala, to become thermodynamically unstable," Abhilash said.

Research by Abhilash and other scientists published in the npj Climate and Atmospheric Science journal in 2022 found that rainfall over the west coast of India was becoming more convective.

Convective rainfall is often characterised by intense, short-duration showers or thunderstorms in a small area.

Another study by Abhilash and scientists from the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology and the India Meteorological Department, published in Elsevier in 2021, found that one of the hotspots of heavy rainfall in the Konkan region (between 14 degrees north and 16 degrees north) seemed to have shifted southward, with likely fatal consequences.

The landslides also brought to the fore the unheeded warnings of the "Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel" set up by the government under ecologist Madhav Gadgil.

The panel submitted its report to the Centre in 2011, recommending that the entire hill range be declared an ecologically sensitive area and divided into ecologically sensitive zones based on their ecological sensitivity.

It recommended a ban on mining, quarrying, new thermal power plants, hydropower projects and large-scale wind energy projects in ecologically sensitive zone 1.

The recommendations have not been implemented even after 14 years due to resistance from state governments, industries and local communities. *—PTI*

**LETTERS** write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR ساہر

# NASA's DART hits asteroid, unveils 12M years of history

NASA's DART mission – Double Asteroid Redirection Test – was humanity's first real-world planetary defence mission.

In September 2022, the DART spacecraft smashed into the companion "moon" of a small asteroid 11 million kilometres from Earth. One goal was to find out if we can give such things a shove if one were headed our way.

By gathering lots of data on approach and after the impact, we would also get a better idea of what we'd be in for if such an asteroid were to hit Earth.

Five new studies published in Nature Communications today have used the images sent back from DART and its travel buddy LICIACube to unravel the origins of the Didymos-Dimorphos dual asteroid system. They've also put that data in context for other asteroids out there.

**Asteroids are natural hazards**

Our Solar System is full of small asteroids – debris that never made it into planets. Those that come close to Earth's orbit around the Sun are called Near Earth Objects (NEOs).

These pose the biggest risk to us, but are also the most accessible.

Planetary defence from these natural hazards really depends on knowing their composition – not just what they're made of, but how they're put together. Are they solid objects that will punch through our atmosphere if given the chance, or are they more like rubble piles, barely held together?

The Didymos asteroid, and its tiny moon Dimorphos, are what's known as a binary asteroid system. They were the perfect target for the DART mission, because the effects of the impact could be easily measured in changes to Dimorphos' orbit.

They are also close(ish) to Earth, or are at least NEOs. And they're a very common type of asteroid we haven't had a good look at before. The chance to also learn how binary asteroids form was the icing on the cake.

Quite a few binary asteroid systems have been discovered, but planetary scientists don't exactly know how they form. In one of the new studies, a team led by Olivier Barnouin from Johns Hopkins University in the United States used images from DART and LICIACube to estimate the age of the system by looking at surface roughness and crater records.

They found Didymos is roughly 12.5 million years old, while its moon Dimorphos formed less than 300,000 years ago. That may still sound like a lot, but it's much younger than was expected.

**A pile of boulders**

Dimorphos is also not a solid rock as we'd typically imagine. It is a rubble pile of boulders that are barely held together. Along with its young age, it shows there can be multiple "generations" of these rubble pile asteroids in the wake of larger asteroid collisions.

Sunlight actually causes small bodies like asteroids to spin. As Didymos started to spin like a top, its shape became squashed and bulged in the middle. This was enough to cause large pieces to just roll off the main body, with some even leaving tracks.

Another study, led by Maurizio Pajola from Auburn University in the US used boulder distributions to confirm this. The team also discovered there were significantly more (up to five times) large boulders than have been observed on other non-binary asteroids humans have visited.

Lastly, another paper shows this type of asteroid appears to be more susceptible to cracking. This happens due to the heating–cooling cycles between day and night: like a freeze–thaw cycle but without the water.

This means if something (such as a spacecraft) were to impact it, there would be much more debris thrown up into space. It would even increase the amount of "shove" it could have. But there is a good chance that what lies underneath is much stronger than what we're seeing on the surface.

This is where the European Space Agency's Hera mission will step in. It will not only be able to provide higher-resolution images of the DART impact sites, but will also be able to probe the asteroids' interiors using low-frequency radar.

The DART mission not only tested our ability to protect ourselves from future asteroid impacts, but also enlightened us on the formation and evolution of rubble pile and binary asteroids near Earth.

*—The Conversation*

In September, 2022, the DART spacecraft smashed into the companion moon of a small asteroid 11 million kms from Earth ***PHOTO: PIXABAY***

# *Olympics bets against climate change with Seine swimming & may lose*

With plans for athletes to swim the Seine River through the heart of Paris, Olympic organisers essentially bet against climate change's extreme weather. For several days it appeared they would lose — by ditching the swimming portion of triathlon races.

It wasn't until early Wednesday, after the men's race had been postponed a day and test events called off, that organisers announced the most recent tests showed the water met standards to allow swimming.

Some scientists and engineers said organizers were taking a huge gamble at a time when heavy rains have increased with human-caused climate change, especially in Europe. The rains run off from the urban environment and contribute to higher bacteria levels in the city's famed river.

"They just gambled, flipped the coin and hope for a dry season and it turned out to be the rainiest in the last 30 years," said Metin Duran, a professor of civil and environmental engineering at Villanova University who has researched stormwater management.

Organisers "had worked through most of the scenarios related to computer hacking and physical threats without fully assessing the implications of extreme events associated with climate," said University of Arizona climate scientist Kathy Jacobs, who directs the Center for Climate Adaptation Science and Solutions.

"It's definitely time to take climate threats seriously."

If any city could be expected to be mindful of the challenges of climate change, it's Paris. It's where the most significant climate agreement in history was struck almost a decade ago — to try to limit Earth's warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels.

And the Paris games aspire to have half the carbon footprint of earlier games held in London and Rio de Janeiro.

Paris, like many older cities around the world, has a combined sewer system, which means that the city's wastewater and stormwater flow through the same pipes.

With heavy or prolonged periods of rain, the pipes' capacity is reached, sending raw wastewater into the river instead of a treatment plant.

Paris spent 1.4 billion euros ($1.5 billion) to improve the water quality in the Seine, including building a giant basin to capture excess rainwater and keep wastewater from entering the river, renovating sewer infrastructure and upgrading wastewater treatment plants.

If any city could be expected to be mindful of the challenges of climate change, it's Paris. It's where the most significant climate agreement in history was struck almost a decade ago ***PHOTO: PTI***

But persistent rains, which dampened the opening ceremonies and temporarily gave way to a heat warning on Tuesday, worked against that. Tuesday's men's triathlon was postponed to Wednesday. The city has had at least 80 rainy days in Paris so far this year, about two-and-a-half weeks more than normal, according to the French meteorological office.

An AP analysis of weather data found that Paris in 2024 had its second-highest number of rainy days since 1950, surpassed only by 2016. There's been only one week-long dry spell this year to give the drainage system a break. Normally there's at least three by this time, the AP analysis shows.

"Heavy rainfall in the summer has always been a possibility and with a warming climate these heavy rainfall events have only become heavier, said Friederike Otto, a climate scientist at the Imperial College of London. "Thus, that definitely would need to have gone into the planning."

A study last week in the journal Science found a noticeable global increase in the variability — the all-or-nothing quality — of rain and snow in the past 100 years with a big jump starting in 1960.

Researchers then did the standard climate attribution analysis to compare what actually happened with what would have been expected in a fictional world without human-caused climate change.

They found this increase in heavy rains punctuated by longer dry spells had global warming's fingerprints on it.

The study also found three areas — Europe, eastern North America and Australia — had seen much higher jumps in the increase in rainfall extremes.

Duran, the Villanova professor, noted that the acceptable pollution level for the triathlon is nearly four times weaker than the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has for swimmable waterways. Paris' mayor made a public show of swimming in the river earlier this month, something Duran called a publicity stunt. He said he would not swim in the Seine.

He called the underground storage basins "the last thing any stormwater expert would suggest as a solution," Duran said.

Few cities use that solution any more because it's limited and easily gets overwhelmed by the heavier and more frequent rains of climate change. It's a solution for the era before global warming kicked in heavily, he said.

Future Olympics sites need to take a wetter world into consideration, Villanova's Duran said: "The sewer overflow issue is bound to get worse until climate change is addressed."

Los Angeles, the host city for the 2028 games, could learn a lesson and work toward more green spaces and fewer private vehicles, Imperial College's Otto said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: MOFA.GOV.AE

## UAE to evacuate 85 Palestinians, 63 others to Abu Dhabi

**ABU DHABI, 31 JULY**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates on Tuesday announced an urgent initiative to evacuate 85 sick Palestinians including cancer patients in need of extensive treatment and 63 family members from Ramon airport in Israel to Abu Dhabi via the Karam Abu Salem crossing, a statement said. The statement added that the UAE is committed to support the people in Gaza. Reem Al Hashimy, Minister of State for International Cooperation said, "At this critical time, the urgency of our mission to evacuate injured Palestinians to Abu Dhabi cannot be overstated. This unprecedented route reflects the gravity of the situation and our resolute commitment to alleviating the suffering of the people of the Gaza Strip and to ensure the arrival and distribution of relief through all available means, including land, sea and air. *—ANI*

## Boeing names new CEO as it posts loss of more than $1.4B

**CHICAGO, 31 JULY**

Boeing lost more than USD 1.4 billion in the second quarter and said a longtime industry executive will take over as chief executive of the troubled aircraft manufacturer next week. Robert "Kelly" Ortberg, 64, a former CEO at Rockwell Collins, will succeed as CEO, the company said. Boeing's loss was wider and revenue lower than Wall Street expected. Revenue fell 15 per cent from a year earlier, and both its commercial-airplanes business and defense unit lost money. The disappointing results come at a tumultuous time for Boeing. The company agreed to plead guilty to fraud in connection with the Max, two of which crashed, killing 346 people. The Federal Aviation Administration has increased its oversight of the company following mistakes including the blowout of a panel on an Alaska Airlines jet. It is pushing back against whistleblower allegations of manufacturing shortcuts that crimp on safety. *—AP*

## Turkey approves 'massacre law' to remove stray dogs

**ANKARA, 31 JULY**

Turkish legislators have approved a law aimed at removing millions of stray dogs from the country's streets that animal lovers fear will lead to many of the dogs being killed or ending up in neglected, overcrowded shelters. Some critics also say the law will be used to target the opposition, which made huge gains in the latest local elections. The legislation includes penalties for mayors who fail to carry out its provisions and the main opposition party has promised not to implement it. Deputies in the Turkish grand national assembly approved the legislation on Tuesday after a marathon overnight session as the government pushed to have it passed before the summer recess. *—AP*

## Japan hikes interest rates for 2nd time since 2007

**SEOUL, 31 JULY**

Japan's central bank has raised the cost of borrowing for only the second time in 17 years as it tries to normalise monetary policy in the world's fourth largest economy. The Bank of Japan increased its key interest rate to "around 0.25 per cent" from the previous range of 0 per cent to 0.1 per cent. It also outlined a plan to unwind its massive bond buying programme as it eases back from a decade of stimulus measures. The move comes hours before the US Federal Reserve is set to announce its latest interest rate decision, while an announcement is also expected from the Bank of England on Thursday. ***—BBC News***

# Hamas political leader Haniyeh killed in Iran

## Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei vows revenge on Israel over this assassination

**BEIRUT, 31 JULY**

Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas' supreme leader in exile who landed on Israel's hit list after the militant group staged its surprise October 7 attacks, was killed in an airstrike in the Iranian capital early Wednesday. He was 61.

Hamas said Haniyeh was killed at his residence in Tehran in an Israeli airstrike after he attended the swearing-in ceremony of Iran's new president. Israel has not commented on the accusation.

Haniyeh's death makes him the latest Hamas official to be killed by Israel since the Hamas-led 7 October attacks, when militants killed 1,200 people and took about 250 hostages. The devastating Israel-Hamas war the attacks set off has become the deadliest and longest in the Arab-Israeli conflict. More than 39,000 Palestinians have been killed, according to health officials in Gaza. While Hamas' Gaza leader Yahya Sinwar is believed to have been the mastermind of the attacks, Haniyeh, seen as a more moderate force in Hamas, lauded them as a humiliating blow to Israel's aura of invincibility.

Iranians with Palestinian and Iranian flags carry the portrait of late Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran ***PHOTO: EPA***

"The Al-Aqsa flood was an earthquake that struck the heart of the Zionist entity and has made major changes at the world level," Haniyeh said in a speech in Iran during the funeral of late Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi in May.

Michael Milshtein, a Hamas expert at Tel Aviv University, said Haniyeh had a commanding role in the group's foreign policy and diplomacy, but was less involved in military affairs. Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian condemned the killing of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on Wednesday.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Wednesday vowed revenge on Israel over the killing of Hamas' political chief.

Khamenei said Israel "prepared a harsh punishment for itself" after Ismail Haniyeh was killed in a predawn airstrike in the Iranian capital Tehran. "We consider his revenge as our duty," Khamenei said in a statement on his official website, saying Haniyeh was "a dear guest in our home." *—AP*

- Michael Milshtein, a Hamas expert at Tel Aviv University, said Haniyeh had a commanding role in the group's foreign policy and diplomacy, but was less involved military affairs

## 'TOP COMMANDER SURVIVED A DRONE STRIKE'

**CAIRO, 31 JULY**

Sudan's military said its top commander, Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, survived a drone attack on a military graduation ceremony that killed five people in the country's east.

The military said in a statement that the attack by two drones took place in Gebeit, a town in eastern Sudan, after the ceremony was concluded. Military chief Burhan, who was attending, was not hurt, according to Lt. Col Hassan Ibrahim, from the military spokesman's office.

Sudan has been torn by war for more than a year between the military and a powerful paramilitary group, the Rapid Support Forces. With righting in the capital, Khartoum, the military and government leadership largely operates out of eastern Sudan near the Red Sea Coast. *—AP*

Opposition leader Maria Corina Machado, and Edmundo Gonzalez hold up vote tally sheets during a protest in Venzuela on Tuesday ***PHOTO: PTI***

## Carter Centre can't verify Venezuela poll results

**CARACAS, 31 JULY**

The Carter Centre said it was unable to verify the results of Venezuela's presidential election, blaming authorities for a "complete lack of transparency" in declaring Nicolas Maduro the winner without providing any individual polling tallies.

The statement Tuesday night by the Atlanta-based group is perhaps the harshest rebuke yet of Venezuela's chaotic election process because it comes from one of just a handful of outside groups invited by the Maduro government to observe the vote. The Carter Centre's harsh criticism capped a second long day of protests against the results by opponents of Maduro who said their candidate, Edmundo Gonzalez, trounced the incumbent by a more than two-to-one margin.

Maduro's government hasn't taken lightly to the criticism and ratcheted up their attacks on their opponents Tuesday, with some allies suggesting the opposition's most influential leader and a presidential candidate be arrested.

A day after Maduro was declared the winner by a National Electoral Council that is loyal to him and the ruling party, the attacks, which were aired on national television, followed the opposition's surprise release of detailed voting data that it said shows that Edmundo González won by a landslide.

The electoral council has not released any results from the polling center level, which come from tally sheets that the more than 30,000 electronic voting machines print after polls close.

It is not obligated to do so, but in previous elections it has posted the figures online within hours. *—AP*

## Russia begins another drill to train troops

**MOSCOW, 31 JULY**

The Russian military on Wednesday began a third round of drills with tactical nuclear weapons, part of the Kremlin's messaging intended to force the West to limit its support for Ukraine.

The Russian Defence Ministry said the drills will feature units of the central and southern military districts armed with Iskander short-range missiles. They will practice receiving nuclear weapons from storage and deploying them to designated launch areas. The maneuvers will also include air force units that will arm their warplanes with nuclear weapons and perform patrol flights. *—AP*

## PROTESTERS TARGET HUGO CHÁVEZ STATUES

**CARACAS, 31 JULY**

As protests over Venezuela's disputed Presidential election spread across the country, opposition supporters have focused their fury on President Nicolás Maduro's predecessor and political mentor, Hugo Chávez.

At least seven statues of the former leader have been attacked, some beheaded with sledgehammers, and some completely torn down. In the seaside city of La Guaira, 30km from the capital Caracas, a group of protesters tore down a 3.5-metre Chávez monument which had been inaugurated in 2017 by Maduro, shouting: "This government is going to fall."

Once removed, the statue was dragged by motorcycles across the plaza, doused in gasoline, and set on fire, the Associated Press reported. In Coro, the capital of Falcón state, protesters were filmed attacking a concrete statue of Chávez, the former paratrooper who ruled Venezuela from 1999 until his death in 2013. Cheers erupted as the monument fell, and a protester waved a Venezuelan flag over the crumbled remains.

*—Courtesy, The Guardian*

A destroyed statue of the late Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez lies next to its base in Valencia, Venezuela ***PHOTO: PTI***

**PRESIDENTIAL RACE**

# Kamala qualifies as only Democratic candidate

US Vice President Kamala Harris speaks during a campaign rally at Georgia State Convocation Center in USA on Wednesday ***PHOTO: PTI***

**WASHINGTON, 31 JULY**

Vice President Kamala Harris has sealed her Democratic Presidential nomination as she emerged as the only candidate to qualify for virtual roll call votes from the party's delegates from across the country.

As many as 3,923 delegates from across the country petitioned to put Harris, 59, on the ballot for the Democratic nomination, and she secured the support of 99 per cent of the participating delegates, the Democratic Party announced Tuesday night after the official deadline.

Democratic National Committee (DNC) Chair Jaime Harrison and the Democratic National Convention Committee (DNCC) Chair Minyon Moore said no other candidate met the threshold of 300 delegate signatures to qualify for the ballot.

The chairs said that voting on the virtual roll call – the process through which Harris will officially become the Democratic nominee – will begin on August 1 and end on August 5.

"Democratic delegates from across the nation made their voices heard, overwhelmingly backing Vice President Kamala Harris as the Democratic Party's presumptive nominee. As we prepare to open the voting on our virtual roll call, we move to this final stage of our nomination process with unprecedented momentum and unity across our party," the chairs said. *—PTI*

- 3,923 delegates from across the country petitioned to put Harris, 59, on the ballot for the Democratic nomination, and she secured the support of 99 per cent of the participating delegates

## About 8 in 10 Democrats are with Kamala: Poll

**WASHINGTON, 31 JULY**

Vice President Kamala Harris appears to have energized Democrats in the early days of her candidacy, with the surge in warm feelings extending across multiple groups, including some key Democratic constituencies that had been especially tepid about President Joe Biden, a new poll shows.

About 8 in 10 Democrats say they would be somewhat or very satisfied if Harris became the Democratic nominee for president, according to the survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, which was conducted after Biden withdrew from the race.

In a separate AP-NORC poll, taken before Biden dropped out but after his debate against former President Donald Trump, only about 4 in 10 Democrats said they were somewhat or very satisfied that he was the Democratic Party's likely nominee for president. The rapidly changing views among Democrats in such a short time span underscore how swiftly the party — from rank-and-file voters to elected officials — has coalesced behind Harris as its standard-bearer, motivated by the fresh face at the top of the ticket and newfound confidence in the party's prospects against Trump in November. *—AP*

**5,000 EVACUATED**

# *Rains in N Korea flood thousands of houses*

**SEOUL, 31 JULY**

The recent heavy rains in northwestern North Korea flooded thousands of houses and a vast extent of farmland and left many residents homeless and living in makeshift tents, North Korea's state media reported Wednesday.

North Korea earlier said more than 5,000 people stranded in Sinuiju city and Uiju town were rescued by airlift and other evacuation work after Saturday's rains caused a river on the Chinese border to swell. But it hadn't mentioned any specific damage, or said if there were any casualties.

North Korea is prone to flooding from heavy summer rains because of poor drainage, deforestation and dilapidated infrastructure.

The official Korean Central News Agency said Wednesday that about 4,100 houses, 3,000 hectares (about 7,410 acres) of agricultural fields and numerous public buildings, roads and railways in Sinuiju and Uiju were flooded.

North Korean government releases a flood-hit area in Sinuiju city, North Phyongan province, North Korea on Wednesday ***PHOTO: PTI***

It said about 150 people in nearby Jagang province had also been isolated due to a separate river flooding there, but they were all evacuated to safety by military helicopters.

In an emergency Politiburo meeting presided in Sinuiju, leader Kim Jong Un asked authorities to "strictly punish" those who he said neglected their responsibilities for disaster prevention and caused "even the casualty that can not be allowed," according to KCNA.

KCNA said Politburo members later approved the appointments of new Workers' Party secretaries in the flood-hit regions and a new public security minister. Kim earlier said North Korea's emergency response agency and the Ministry of Public Security didn't know the exact populations of the flood-battered areas, so the number of people rescued was much larger than expected. *—PTI*

## Nearly 40 cops injured in Southport violent disorder

**LONDON, 31 JULY**

A far-right mob targeted a mosque in north-west England that saw three young girls fatally stabbed during a peaceful vigil in their memory and around 40 police officers suffered injuries in the disorder.

According to reports, misinformation being spread on social media about the ethnicity and religion of the 17-year-old male suspect in police custody led to the rioting at the mosque in Southport on Tuesday night.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who had earlier visited the site of Monday's brutal stabbing attack on a dance studio on Hart Street, condemned the mobs for hijacking the vigil and insulting the grieving community with their actions.

"The people of Southport are reeling after the horror inflicted on them yesterday. They deserve our support and our respect," said Starmer.

"Those who have hijacked the vigil for the victims with violence and thuggery have insulted the community as it grieves. They will feel the full force of the law," he said.

***PHOTO: X@TTINDIA***

Alice Dasilva Aguiar, 9, Bebe King, 6, and Elsie Dot Stancombe, 7, were named as the victims of the fatal stabbing. Eight others were seriously injured, five of whom remain in critical condition in hospital.

Merseyside Police have said it was currently not treating the incident as terror-related. The police said 22 of its officers sustained serious injuries, including fractures, lacerations, a suspected broken nose and concussion. The rioters set cars belonging to members of the public alight, threw bricks at the local mosque and damaged a local convenience store, and set large refuse bins on fire. *—PTI*

## Gold rises to ₹350; silver jumps ₹1,100

NEW DELHI, 31 JULY

Gold prices rose Rs 350 to Rs 71,950 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday, taking cues from domestic demand and global trends. In the previous session, the precious metal had closed at Rs 71,600 per 10 grams. Silver prices jumped Rs 1,100 to Rs 85,600 per kilogram on Wednesday. It had closed at Rs 84,500 per kg in the previous trade, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also increased by Rs 350 to Rs 71,600 per 10 grams from the previous close of Rs 71,250 per 10 grams. The commodity market experts suggested that the gold demand in the Indian markets remains high, driven by the recent import duty cuts and the upcoming festive season. Globally, Comex gold is trading higher at USD 2,465.50 per ounce, up by USD 13.60 per ounce from the previous close. *—PTI*

## Rupee closes 1P higher at 83.72 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 31 JULY

The rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled for the day higher by 1 paisa at 83.72 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday, as the support from positive domestic equities was negated by month-end Dollar demand from importers. Forex traders said significant foreign fund outflows and overnight surge in crude oil prices weighed on the local unit. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the domestic currency opened 1 paisa higher than the previous day's close. It slipped to 83.75 during the day and settled for the day 1 paisa higher at 83.72 (provisional) against US dollar. On Tuesday, the rupee closed flat at 83.73 against the American currency. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was down 0.36 per cent to 104.17. *—PTI*

## Samsung posts a 15-fold increase in operating profits

SEOUL, 31 JULY

G Samsung Electronics Co. reported a 15-fold increase in operating profit for the second quarter this year, largely thanks to a strong demand for memory chips amid the expansion of artificial intelligence technologies. The South Korean semiconductor and smartphone giant said on Wednesday in a statement that its operating profit for the April-June quarter stood at 10.4 trillion won (USD 7.5 billion), up from 670 billion won reported in the same period last year. Samsung said its consolidated revenues rose by about 23 per cent to 74 trillion won (USD 53 billion). The company said favourable market conditions drove higher average sales prices, while robust sales of organic light-emitting diode (OLED) panels also contributed to the stronger results. In the second half of this year, Samsung said that AI servers are expected to take up a larger portion of the market as major cloud service providers and enterprises expand their AI investments. *—PTI*

## IPEF elects India as vice-chair of supply chain council

NEW DELHI, 31 JULY

India has been elected as vice-chair of the supply chain council -- one of the three bodies set up by the 14-member IPEF bloc -- the commerce ministry said on Wednesday. India and 13 other Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) partners have established three bodies under the IPEF's agreement on supply chain resilience. The pact came into force in February this year. The members are Australia, Brunei, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and the US. The IPEF seeks to strengthen economic engagement and cooperation among partner countries with the goal of advancing growth, economic stability and prosperity. *—PTI*

# BYJU'S, BCCI SETTLE RS 158 CR DISPUTE CASE

### Byju's says it paid BCCI Rs 50 cr & will pay remaining by 9 Aug

BENGALURU, 31 JULY

Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Wednesday informed the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) that it has arrived at a settlement with Byju's on the repayment of over Rs 158 crore due to it under cricket jersey sponsorship deals.

NCLAT Chennai Bench was informed today that Riju Raveendran, the brother of Byju's founder, Byju Raveendran has paid Rs 50 crore on Tuesday.

An additional amount of Rs 25 crore will be paid by Friday and the remaining Rs 83 crore due will be paid by 9 August, the NCLAT was told.

The settlement was, however, opposed by a US-based financial creditor who told the appellate tribunal that this repayment is tainted and being funded with stolen money.

Representing the creditor, Senior Advocate Mukul Rohatgi added that both Byju and Riju conspired to siphon over Rs 500 crore, as per the findings of a US court.

The settlement wa opposed by US-based financial creditor who claimed that this repayment is funded with stolen money *PHOTO: BYJUS.COM*

Among other submissions, he argued that Byju Raveendran has now absconded to Dubai, amid his financial woes.

Representing the BCCI, Senior Advocate Harish Salve weighed in by assuring that the cricket control authority would never accept any tainted money.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who also appeared for the BCCI, added that the creditor's concerns were based on assumptions.

The financial creditors, however, urged the NCLAT to direct Byju's to file an undertaking that the money being paid to BCCI is not Byju Raveendran's.

Byju Raveendran's counsel replied that some assurance should be given to ensure that the insolvency process against Byju's does not come in the way of the proposed settlement.

Meanwhile, the interim resolution professional (IRP) appointed to oversee the insolvency proceedings initiated against Byju's reiterated concerns that Byju's is not cooperating with the process.

On 19 July the NCLT, Bengaluru admitted an insolvency plea filed by the BCCI against Think and Learn Private Limited, which is the parent company of ed-tech firm Byju's.

On 23 July, Raveendran had moved the NCLAT Chennai challenging the order of the NCLT Bengaluru.

On 29 July, Monday, the judicial member in question recused from hearing matter on this ground.

*—Courtesy, Bar and Bench*

ON METAL & POWER GAINS

# Stock market closes higher for 4th straight day

MUMBAI, 31 JULY

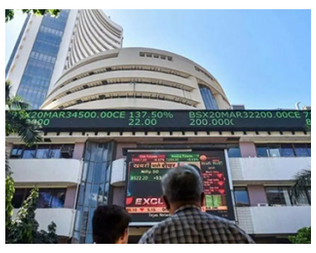


*PHOTO: PTI*

Benchmark BSE Sensex rose by nearly 286 points to close at a record high while Nifty settled above 24,950 level on Wednesday, extending their winning run to the fourth day on gains in metal, power and select auto shares.

The 30-share BSE Sensex settled higher by 285.94 points or 0.35 per cent at 81,741.34 -- its all-time closing high -- with 20 of its components advancing and 10 ending lower. The index opened higher and jumped 372.64 points or 0.45 per cent to hit an intra-day high of 81,828.04. The NSE Nifty rose 93.85 points or 0.38 per cent to close at an all-time high of 24,951.15. During the day, it surged 127.3 points or 0.51 per cent. Among the Sensex stocks, JSW Steel, Asian Paints, Maruti Suzuki India, NTPC, Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone, Bharti Airtel, ITC and Tech Mahindra were the major gainers.

Reliance Industries, Tata Motors, Infosys, Mahindra and Mahindra, Bajaj Finance and Axis Bank were the laggards. Global oil benchmark Brent crude rose 1.88 per cent to USD 80.51 a barrel.

Foreign institutional investors offloaded equities worth Rs 5,598.64 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data.

On Tuesday, the 30-share BSE Sensex closed higher by 99.56 points, or 0.12 per cent, at 81,455.40 -- its all-time closing high. The NSE Nifty edged up 21.20 points, to settle at an all-time closing high of 24,857.30. *—PTI*

# Vietnamese PM pitches for FTA with India

NEW DELHI, 31 JULY

India and Vietnam should explore the possibility of a free trade pact to further strengthen the economic cooperation, Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh said on Wednesday.

Chinh, who is accompanied by a high-level delegation, including several ministers, deputy ministers and business leaders, is on a three-day visit to India. Going forward, the two nations should aim to increase their bilateral trade to USD 20 billion, the Vietnamese Prime Minister said while addressing the Vietnam-India Business Forum. The Vietnamese Prime Minister called upon businesses from the two nations to work together, bring about better solutions to raise bilateral trade to USD 20 billion going forward, and continue to forge stronger cooperation focusing on strategic infrastructure, including transportation, energy, digital and climate infrastructure.

The Vietnamese Prime Minister also participated in the launch ceremony of the new flight route between Ahmedabad (India) and Da Nang (Vietnam).

Pointing out that Vietnam imports 33 per cent of its pharmaceutical products from India, Chinh said it would like to work with India to establish a proper pharmaceutical ecosystem in Vietnam. *—PTI*

Vietnamese PM Pham and PM Narendra Modi *PHOTO: ANI*

43.39L TONNES IN 2023

# India imported 11.32 lakh tonnes of pulses in April-May

NEW DELHI, 31 JULY

India has imported 11.32 lakh tonnes of pulses during the April-May period of this fiscal year to meet domestic demand, the government informed Parliament on Wednesday.

The country had imported 47.39 lakh tonnes of pulses in the entire 2023-24 fiscal.

In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, the Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Nimuben Jayantibhai Bambhaniya informed that 11.32 lakh tonnes of pulses have been imported till May in 2024-25 fiscal.

Import of pulses stood at 24.66 lakh tonnes in 2020-21; 27 lakh tonnes in 2021-22 and 24.96 lakh tonnes in 2022-23.

The minister informed that buffer stock of pulses and onion have been maintained under the Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF) for market interventions to stabilize the volatility prices.

Over 11.37 lakh tonnes of Bharat Chana Dal has been sold to retail consumers till July 22, 2024.

*PHOTO: PTI*

The Bharat Dal has been extended to include Bharat Moong Dal by converting moong stock in the PSF buffer into moong Dal for retail sale to the consumers at subsidized prices of Rs 107/kg for moong dal and Rs 93/kg for Moong sabut. Further, the Bharat Dal has also been extended to include masur dal by converting masur stock in the PSF buffer into masur dal for retail sale to the consumers at price of Rs 89 per kg. *—PTI*

## Call rates in India one of the lowest in world: Scindia

India now has 117 crore mobile connections and 93 crore internet connections, Telecom Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday while noting that call rates in the country are one of the lowest in the world. Scindia said the cost of call for every minute was 53 paisa and it has come down to just 3 paisa now, which is a 93 per cent reduction, one of the lowest rates in the world. At present, India has 117 crore mobile connectivity and 93 crore internet connections, he said. He said the cost of one GB data is Rs 9.12, which is cheapest in the world. *—PTI*

## EU's carbon tax will not help Indian firms, says GTRI

NEW DELHI, 31 JULY

EU's suggestion that India could avoid its carbon tax by imposing a similar levy locally will not help the domestic players much, as they would still be liable for the duty for their exports to the European Union, think tank GTRI said on Wednesday.

The main issue is that carbon prices are usually based on a country's economic situation, so simply adding a local tax would not reduce the overall tax burden significantly, the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said.

Even with such a system, Indian firms would still need to pay the EU the difference amounting to USD 51.3 per tonne of $CO_2$ under the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM).

The EU has decided to impose a CBAM, or carbon tax, which will come into effect from January 1, 2026, but from October this year, domestic companies from seven carbon-intensive sectors, including steel, cement, fertiliser, aluminium and hydrocarbon products, would have to share data with regard to carbon emissions. *—PTI*

# India's smartphone shipments dip 2% in Q2

NEW DELHI, 31 JULY

India's smartphone shipments fell two per cent year-on-year in June quarter, hurt by the heatwave and slower demand, as per a report by global research firm Counterpoint that showed Xiaomi reclaimed top spot in volume share and Samsung led in value terms.

Notably, 5G smartphones captured their highest-ever share of 77 per cent in the overall shipments, according to Counterpoint's Monthly India Smartphone Tracker.

Another key takeaway was that India's smartphone market hit its highest ever Q2 value, driven by the ongoing trend of premiumisation.

"India's smartphone shipments fell 2 per cent YoY in Q2 2024 (April-June)," it said.

The decline was influenced by a heatwave, a seasonal slump, and slower demand from Q1 2024.

This reduced demand led to an inventory build-up.

The decline was influenced by a heatwave, a seasonal slump and slower demand from Q1 *PHOTO: PTI*

- Notably, 5G smartphones captured their highest-ever share of 77 per cent in the overall shipments, according to Counterpoint's Monthly India Smartphone Tracker

However, summer sales at online channels, good harvest and aggressive promotions towards the end of the quarter provided relief to OEMs, helping close the quarter on a better note than at the beginning.

Xiaomi reclaimed the top spot with an 18.9 per cent shipment share, and Vivo followed closely with 18.8 per cent share. Consumers continued to upgrade to higher-value smartphones, supported by better trade-in values and easy financing schemes.

Samsung led the market in terms of value with a 25 per cent share, followed by vivo and Apple. *—PTI*

# Adani Power's net profit down 55% at R3,913 crore

NEW DELHI, 31 JULY

Adani Power on Wednesday reported over 55 per cent dip in its consolidated net profit to Rs 3,913 crore in the June quarter compared to the year-ago period due to higher expenses. The consolidated net profit of the company was Rs 8,759 crore in the quarter ended on 30 June, 2023. Total income declined to Rs 15,474 crore in the April-June quarter of 2024-25 from Rs 18,109 crore in the same quarter of the last year.

Total expenses increased Rs 10,568.44 crore in the quarter from Rs 9,309.39 crore in the same period a year ago. Consolidated power sale volume was at 24.1 billion units (BU) in the first quarter of FY25, up by 38 per cent from 17.5 BU in Q1 FY24 due to improved power demand and larger effective operating capacity.

*PHOTO: PTI*

Meanwhile, Adani Group firm Ambuja Cements Ltd on Wednesday reported a consolidated net profit at Rs 789.63 crore for the first quarter.

The company had reported a net profit of Rs 1,135.46 crore in the April-June period a year ago, according to a regulatory filing by Ambuja Cements Ltd (ACL).

Its revenue from operations was at Rs 8,311.48 crore during the June quarter compared to Rs 8,712.90 crore in the last fiscal. *—PTI*

## OMAXE CHALLENGES SEBI'S BAN ORDER, SHARES FALL 5%

NEW DELHI, 31 JULY

Realty firm Omaxe will consider challenging market regulator SEBI's order that barred the company, its Chairman Rohtas Goel, Managing Director Mohit Goel and three others from the securities market for two years for misrepresentation in the company's financial statements.

The SEBI order had a negative impact on the company's share prices. The stock of the company on Wednesday declined 4.99 per cent to Rs 152.20 apiece -- its lower circuit limit -- on the BSE.

In its 126-page final order, SEBI has also restrained three others -- Sudhangshu S Biswal, Arun Kumar Pandey, and Vimal Gupta -- from the securities markets. *—PTI*

ALL-TIME HIGH

# *India lost Rs 195M due to data breaches*

BENGALURU, 31 JULY

The latest IBM cost of a data breach report has revealed a rise in the financial impact of data breaches in India, reaching an all-time high of Rs 195 million in 2024.

This marks a 39 per cent increase since 2020 and a 9 per cent rise from the previous year.

The report highlights that 70 per cent of breached organisations globally reported disruption. In India, lost business -- including operational downtime, loss of customers, and reputation damage -- drove a nearly 45 per cent increase in breach costs, while notification costs rose by 19 per cent from the previous year.

This marks a 39% increase since 2020 and 9% rise from 2023 *PHOTO: ANI*

The report identifies phishing and stolen or compromised credentials as the most common initial attack types in India, each accounting for 18 per cent of incidents.

Cloud misconfiguration followed at 12 per cent. Business email compromise emerged as the costliest root cause, averaging Rs 215 million per breach, with social engineering (Rs 213 million) and phishing (Rs 209 million) also contributing to breach costs.

The report found that 34 per cent of data breaches in India involved public clouds, with an average cost of Rs 227 million. Breaches spanning multiple environments took the longest to identify and contain, averaging 327 days.

The industrial sector in India experienced the highest breach costs, averaging Rs 255 million. The technology industry followed at Rs 243 million, and the pharmaceutical sector at Rs 221 million. The report indicates that 28 per cent of organisations in India are now extensively deploying security AI and automation, up from 20 per cent in 2023. *—ANI*

# L&T bags order for automobile plant in B'luru

NEW DELHI, 31 JULY

Infrastructure major Larsen and Toubro (L&T) on Wednesday said it has bagged an order to construct an automobile plant near Bengaluru.

The project has been bagged by the buildings and factories business vertical of Larsen & Toubro, the company said in a filing to the BSE.

The plant will be constructed near Bengaluru by adhering to Indian Green Building Council norms.

"The scope entails comprehensive design, execution of civil, structural, architectural and MEPF (mechanical, electrical, plumbing and fire protection) services," the filing said.

The company has expertise and experience to undertake all types of engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) projects for a variety of sectors.

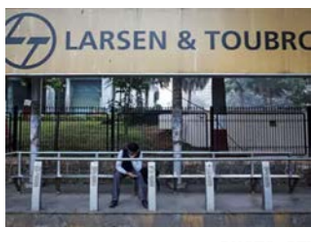



*PHOTO: PTI*

Larsen & Toubro is a USD 27 billion Indian multinational enterprise engaged in EPC projects, hi-tech manufacturing, and services, operating across multiple geographies. *—PTI*

| COUNTRIES | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. China | 8 | 6 | 2 | 16 |
| 2. Aus | 7 | 4 | 3 | 14 |
| 3. Japan | 7 | 3 | 4 | 14 |
| 4. France | 6 | 9 | 2 | 22 |
| 38. India | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |

# In pursuit of glory: India's heavyweights turn on style

## However, Batra's singles campaign ends with loss to Hiranod

**PARIS, 31 JULY**

India shuttler PV Sindhu marched into the Round of 16 of badminton women's singles event after beating Kristin Kuuba of Estonia in the final Group M match at the ongoing Paris Olympics on Wednesday. Sindhu dominated over Kuuba and won the match 21-5, 21-10 in a 34-minute contest at the La Chapelle Arena.

Ace shuttler Lakshya Sen defeated Indonesia's Jonatan Christie 21-18, 21-12 in the badminton men's singles Group L match and secured a place in the pre-quarters at the ongoing Paris Olympics.

Also, boxer Lovlina Borgohain opened her Paris Olympics 2024 campaign in style, defeating Norway's Sunniva Hofstad 5:0 in the women's 75 kg round of 16 bouts on Wednesday. Borgohain, a 69 kg Bronze medalist at Tokyo 2020, is seeded eighth in her first 75 kg Olympic tournament.

On the other hand, Swapnil Kusale finished seventh in the qualification round of men's 50m 3P to qualify for the final at the ongoing Paris Olympics on Wednesday.

Indian shooters Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar and Swapnil Kusale both appeared in the men's 50m 3P qualification round at the Paris 2024 Olympics.

On his Olympic debut, Kusale finished seventh with a score of 590-38x. While, Tomar ranked 11th with a total of 589-33x. Only the top eight shooters have qualified for the final round, and Tomar failed to make his place in the final round.

Paddler Sreeja Akula stormed into the Round of 16. The Indian paddler won the Round of 32 match 4-2 (9-11, 12-10, 11-4, 11-5, 10-12, 12-10). The match lasted for 51 minutes at the South Paris Arena on Wednesday.

Manika Batra's splendid run at the Paris Olympics came to an end with a defeat against higher-ranked Japanese Miu Hirano, hours after her compatriot Sreeja Akula celebrated her birthday by reaching the women's singles pre-quarterfinals in the table tennis competition here Wednesday.

Seasoned Manika had become the first Indian to progress to the Round of 16 at Olympic Games on Monday and Sreeja joined her in the pre-quarterfinals with a 4-2 win over Singapore's Jian Zeng. —*ANI/PTI*

**Clockwise from top left:** India's Lovlina Borgohain (in blue); PV Sindhu; Lakshya Sen, Swapnil Kusale ***PHOTOS: PTI***

## EQUESTRIAN ANUSH VAGARWALLA EXITS FROM GROUP STAGE

**PARIS, 31 JULY**

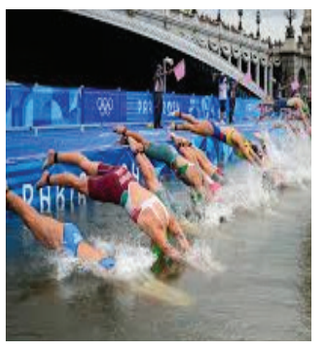
Asian Games medallist Anush Agarwalla crashed out of the Equestrian event, finishing a below-par ninth in his group in the individual dressage category at the Paris Olympics here.

Agarwalla, who won a gold and a bronze medal in team and individual dressage events in 2022 Hangzhou Asian Games, scored a below-par 66.444 with his partner Sir Caramello Old but that was not enough to ensure him a place in the medal round.

Agarwalla, astride Sir Caramello Old, finished ninth in Group E in the dressage Grand Prix Individual Qualifier round of the Games. The ninth-place finish in his group meant, 24-year-old Agarwalla, who has been training in Germany since he was 17, was eliminated from the competition in the very first stage. But it was still a good enough achievement as Agarwalla became the first Indian equestrian to compete in dressage at the Olympics after achieving the Minimum Eligibility Requirement (MER) four times to obtain a quota for the country. —*PTI*

## Triathletes begin swimming in Seine

**PARIS, 31 JULY**



On a morning that started with rain, the Olympic triathlons got underway Wednesday as the women dove into the Seine River to start the swim after days of delays and uncertainty over water quality concerns.

The athletes began near the Pont Alexandre III, a bridge that spans the famed Paris waterway.

The steady drizzle tapered off just as the athletes splashed into the water. Some of the triathletes dunked their swim goggles in the Seine before putting them on.

The decision to go ahead with the swim for the triathlon competitions is a big win for the city, Olympics organizers and the athletes. Officials undertook an ambitious plan, including 1.4 billion euros ($1.5 billion) in infrastructure improvements, to clean up the long-polluted Seine and have been steadfast in their insistence that the swimming portion of the triathlon and the marathon swimming events next week could safely be held in the river.

Elevated levels of bacteria in the river pushed the men's race originally planned for Tuesday to Wednesday, when the women's competition had been scheduled. Test events meant to allow the athletes to familiarize themselves with the course had already been canceled for the same reason on Sunday and Monday. —*AP*

**GOLDEN FEELINGS**

Gold medal winner France's Cassandre Beaugrand pose with their medals during a medal ceremony for the women's individual triathlon competition at the 2024 Summer Olympics, Wednesday ***PHOTO: PTI***

Novak Djokovic in action on Wednesvday ***PHOTO: PTI***

## DJOKOVIC REACHES QUARTERFINALS

**PARIS, 31 JULY**

Novak Djokovic needed a bit of time to assert himself Wednesday at the Paris Olympics before taking control with a five-game run for a 7-5, 6-3 victory over Dominik Koepfer of Germany, reaching the Summer Games singles quarterfinals for the fourth time.

A gold medal is pretty much the only accomplishment of significance missing from the resume of Djokovic, a 37-year-old from Serbia who has won a record 24 Grand Slam titles and spent more weeks at No. 1 than anyone in the history of the computerized tennis rankings.That is why Djokovic, the top-seeded man in Paris, has proclaimed success at these Olympics his priority for the year. His one medal so far was a bronze in 2008 in Beijing. This time, tennis matches are being played at Roland Garros, the facility that hosts the French Open, which Djokovic has won three times. —*PTI*

## Chopra relies on consistency to defend Gold

**PARIS, 31 JULY**

Neeraj Chopra's broad shoulders will carry a weight of massive expectations when his fabled consistency is put through a trial by fire, while the lesser known names in India's 29-strong contingent will aim to emulate some of his success when the Olympic Games' athletics competition gets underway here on Thursday.

A nagging injury forced Chopra to compete in very few events in the build-up to the Games, but the star javelin thrower is still among the favourites to finish on the podium and perhaps clinch an unprecedented second successive gold medal.

A top podium finish on August 8 for Chopra will make him only the fifth man in Olympics history to defend his title and the first Indian to win two gold medals in an individual event in the multi-sporting spectacle.

Eric Lemming (Sweden; 1908 and 1912), Jonni Myyra (Finland; 1920 and 1924), Jan Zelezny (Czech Republic; 1992, 1996 and 2000) and Andreas Thorkildsen (Norway; 2004 and 2008) are the only ones to have defended the men's javelin gold medals in the Olympics.

One of the most consistent javelin throwers in recent times, Chopra has sent his spear below 85m mark just twice out of his 15 competitions since winning gold in Tokyo Olympics. —*PTI*

## KEY EVENTS

### ATHLETICS

**MEN'S 20KM RACE WALK, FINAL | TIME: 11.00 AM**

**Akshdeep Singh,** 24, Punjab
He holds the Indian National record in 20km race walk

**Vikash Singh,** 27, Uttar Pradesh
Singh won a BRONZE at the Asian Athletics Championships in Bangkok in July 2023

**Paramjeet Singh Bisht,** 22, Uttarakhand
2024 South Asian & Indian Race Walking Championships: SILVER (10km race walk)

**WOMEN'S 20KM RACE WALK, FINAL | TIME: 12.50 PM**

**Priyanka Goswami,** 28, Uttar Pradesh
She represented India at the Tokyo Olympics, finishing in 17th position

### ARCHERY | TIME: 2:31 PM

**MEN'S INDIVIDUAL, 1/32 ELIMINATION ROUND**

**Pravin Ramesh JADHAV,** 28, Maharashtra
he was a member of the first Indian team to qualify for the final since 2005; the team received the silver medal.

### GOLF | TIME: 12.30 PM

**MEN'S INDIVIDUAL STROKE PLAY, ROUND 1**

**Shubhankar Sharma,** 28, Uttar Pradesh
Won the Professional Golf Tour of India's 2017 McLeod Russel Tour Championship

**Gaganjeet Bhullar,** 36, Punjab
In March 2019, Bhullar finished fifth at the Kenya Open for his best result of the season

### HOCKEY | TIME: 01:30 PM

**MEN'S, GROUP B, INDIA VS BELGIUM**
Men's team won the competition a record four times – in 2011, 2016, 2018, and 2023. In total, India has won 29 official international titles.

### SAILING

**MEN'S DINGHY, RACE 1 | TIME: 03.45 PM**

**Vishnu Saravanan,** 25, Tamil Nadu
He is the first Indian sailor to qualify for the Paris Olympics

**WOMEN'S DINGHY, RACE 1 | TIME: 07.05 PM**

**Nethra Kumanan,** 26, Tamil Nadu
She represented India at the Asian Games in 2014 in South Korea and in 2018 in Jakarta where she finished seventh and fifth respectively.

### SHOOTING | TIME: 3:30 PM

**50M RIFLE 3 POSITIONS WOMEN, QUALIFICATION**

**Anjum Moudgil,** 30, Punjab
Anjum claimed the world number 2 spot in women's 10m Air Rifle ISSF rankings

**Sift Kaur Samra,** 22, Punjab

## STORM DISRUPTS HIGH-SPEED TRAINS FROM PARIS

**PARIS, 31 JULY**

A local storm on Wednesday interrupted all high-speed train traffic connecting Paris to the southeast of the country as well as Switzerland in both directions, France's rail company said, leaving thousands of travellers stranded amid the Olympics and departures for summer vacation.

The SNCF said all the fast trains leaving from and arriving at the Gare de Lyon train station in the French capital were immobilised due to a tree that fell on the tracks and was hit by a train in Burgundy, southeast of the French capital. Regular-speed trains use separate tracks and haven't been affected.

Authorities cut the power off the track and a logging operation has already started to remove the tree, but initial observations showed the matter won't be fixed quickly, the SNCF said, adding that all on that line were being brought back to a station in order to help people find alternatives travel modes, the company added.

This comes after France's train traffic was severely disrupted last week after acts of sabotage ahead of the Olympic Games opening ceremony. High-speed train services had been fully restored earlier this week. —*AP*

## F1's Alpines hire Oliver Oakes as team principal

**ENSTONE, 31 JULY**

Alpine named 36-year-old Oliver Oakes as its team principal on Wednesday as he aims to lead the team "back to competitiveness" in Formula 1. Alpine said Oakes, who is British, would be the second-youngest team principal in F1 history. He brings experience from founding Hitech Grand Prix, a team that has cars in Formula 2 and Formula 3. Alpine is third-to-last in the constructors' standings heading into F1's summer break and announced last week it was parting company with team principal Bruno Famin. The Renault-owned team is a long way from the ambition it announced in 2021 of a "100-race plan" to be a regular podium contender by the end of 2024. "The team has talented people and excellent resources at its core, and I am confident that we can accomplish a great deal together," Oakes said. —*AP*

**ENGLISH PREMIERE LEAGUE**

## *Son scores twice as Spurs win Team K League friendly*

**TOTTENHAM, 31 JULY**

Son Heung-min scored twice as Tottenham edged past a team of the best players from South Korea's top flight to secure a 4-3 friendly win.

Dejan Kulusevski opened the scoring after 29 minutes before South Korea and Spurs captain Son made his mark on his homecoming in Seoul. He curled an effort into the top corner after 38 minutes and slotted home a Kulusevski assist to give his side a 3-0 lead by the break.

But Team K League pulled two back in the second half after replacing their entire team at the break with Stanislav Iljutcenko netting twice within five minutes of the restart.

That prompted Spurs boss Ange Postecoglou to make changes and substitute Will Lankshear volleyed home a Timo Werner cross to give them a two-goal cushion. Oberdan responded for the hosts with nine minutes left to play but Spurs held on to seal victory, with James Maddison hitting the post in injury time.

They are back in pre-season action on Saturday, when they take on Bayern Munich at 12:00 BST in Seoul. Alexander Isak scored his third goal in as many pre-season games to give the Magpies a third-minute lead, but the hosts levelled the scores in the 23rd minute when a Rio Nitta backheel bounced in off the post.

Newcastle regained the lead when Jacob Murphy made it 2-1 on the stroke of half-time, before curling home another two minutes after the restart. A deflected Lewis Hall effort from distance then added the fourth. —*BBC News*

Son Heung-min poses for a photograph after scoring a goal against Spurs ***PHOTO: X/TOTTENHUM***

## Gambhir praises India's tenacity but calls for further improvement

**PALLEKELE, 31 JULY**

Head coach Gautam Gambhir praised India for pulling off a tenacious Super Over win in the low-scoring third T20I against Sri Lanka for a series whitewash, but called for consistent improvement on pitches assisting sharp turn.

Skipper Suryakumar Yadav and Rinku Singh turned out to be 'men with golden arm' as Sri Lanka's saga of inexplicable collapses continued in a low-scoring thriller as India won the third T20I in Super Over to complete a 3-0 series whitewash, which didn't look possible in the 38 overs.

Chasing a target of 138 on a rank turner, Sri Lanka were cruising along at 110 for 1 in 15.1 over before they once again lost their way -- third time in four days to be tied at 137 for 8.

Having miraculously lost their way in the regulation game, the Indians were way more buoyed in the Super Over where Washington Sundar got both wickets giving away only two runs and then the captain fittingly completed the proceedings with a first ball sweep shot.

No amount of credit is enough for the new Indian leader, who came into bowl in the 20th over with six runs to defend and got two wickets in his first two balls.

This was after Rinku, another part-timer, rolled his arm over for the first time in a T20I to bag a couple of wickets, including that of Kusal Perera (46) when all Lanka needed was 9 runs in 12 balls.

Meanwhile, Indian cricketer Hardik Pamdya lauded his team's performance under challenging conditions, highlighting the contributions of key players and the collective effort that led to their success. —*PTI/ANI*

Virat Kohli with Gautam Gambhir during practice session ***PHOTO: PTI***